

COVENANT LEADERSHIP: EFFECTIVE MINISTRY  
LEADERSHIP IN KINGDOM  
COMMUNITIES

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **COVENANT LEADERSHIP: EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERSHIP IN KINGDOM COMMUNITIES**

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Embassy Covenant Church International is located in Troy, Michigan and has experienced congregational stagnation due to an ineffective ministry leadership. The purpose of this study was to educate church leadership that covenant leadership is using a comprehensive leadership development model that identifies internal competencies and external skills of covenant leaders. The project design included questionnaires, six facilitated sessions, role-playing and group observations as the instruments. The hypothesis of the project was that a covenant leadership model would help leaders understand why covenant relationships are important to effective leadership and to gain self-awareness of what prevented them from being covenant leaders.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I must first acknowledge the grace and sovereignty of God. He loved me so much that he sent me two loving angles. They were not my biological parents, adopted parents or even my foster parents; just two caring people willing to raise four daughters as their own. It is because God loved me and knew exactly what I needed on my journey to purpose, he used Robert and Gracie Anderson to demonstrate His love in my life and for that I am eternally grateful. Dad has gone on to glory, but Mama Gracie, ninety-one and a double amputee above the knee, is still showing the world God's love.

I thank my husband Rodney for being amazingly supportive and covering me with prayer and love in our life together and especially on this journey. Thank you, Rev. Dr. Elvin Sadler, my mentor for life, for your prophetic voice and direction through this program. I could not have completed this journey without my context associates, peer associate and professional associates. Finally, thank you Bishop Hugh Daniel Smith, Jr. for your unequivocal declaration of my place as a Doctor of the Church.

## **DEDICATION**

To my amazing children who were the direct recipients of all the messy parts of me. Thank you, Sabrina, for providing me so many opportunities to grow as your mom and as a believer in Christ and his Word. Thank you, Jessica, for your strength and love and forgiveness as I grew in my relationship with you. Thank you, God, for every mountain and valley relationship and the laser-like precision of the Holy Spirit to heal me and grow me from the inside out.



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## INTRODUCTION

The impact of not being wanted by either biological parent colored how I saw myself and how I saw the world around me. It impeded my ability to enter into and then cultivate genuine, trusting relationships. Not understanding how our past experiences color our current situations and impact our ability to be open and vulnerable with others impacts our leadership effectiveness.

Ineffective leadership will continue to be a detriment to the congregation and prevent effective ministry execution. It impedes the development of genuine godly relationships that foster trust within the local church community. It has been determined that the church can benefit from a comprehensive leadership development program that builds personal awareness. Researchers and consultants Robert J. Anderson and William A. Adams developed the Universal Leadership Model, which is a comprehensive leadership development model with a focus on the internal development of the leader initially, then outward skill development. The model is a 360-degree survey tool used to gather input from the leader, their superior, their subordinates and their peers. The survey results are used to focus on the leader's development areas. In this program, the leaders completed only the self-assessment portion of the survey. This information provided awareness of how they view themselves in the five creative dimensions and the three reactive dimensions as well as where their scores ranked in comparison to the other

leaders around the world who had completed the survey. The following chapters provide the foundational support for the program.

Chapter One gives a summary of my ministry context needs and my background and skills. It outlines the need for process improvements in the church but establishes that the need for leadership development would provide the highest leverage for improved ministry delivery.

Chapter Two provides the biblical foundation for the calling of leaders and the building of sincere covenant relationship with God. This chapter identifies a biblical example in Moses that resonates with my journey to leadership. It provides insightful understanding of patience, love and God meeting Moses where he was to bring him into where he was being called to be; a leader of God's people. In the Exodus periscope, God continues to remind Moses of the promises that were made to his fathers as the framing that Moses should use for his current experiences with God. The call to leadership comes from God and our ability to develop covenant relationships is modeled by God, but leadership is not an individual endeavor. The exegetical work for the scripture provides the synergy connection between my spiritual autobiography and the contextual analysis that lead to the selection of the Universal Leadership Model for leadership development.

Chapter Three provides the historical foundation. This chapter contrasts the Pentecostal denomination with the British Baptist through the lens of covenant relationships in the local church and in their denominational organizations. Excerpts from an extensive interview with the current Bishop and Founder of Embassy Covenant Church demonstrates the long-term impact of the fragmented relationships that permeated the Pentecostal denomination and The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (P.A.W.).

The research shows that the Pentecostal focus was on the Oneness doctrine with the outward expression of speaking in tongues and that no care or thought was given concerning the development of genuine relationships and the creation of community through relationship; contrasted with the British Baptist who believed covenant and confessions were both important.

Chapter Four provides the theological framework for the need for a community of believers that can only occur through healthy relationships. Process theology supports the concept that theology is relational to our experiences and that we use these experiences as filters to assign meaning. Process theology says that we are all interconnected and that being in relationship is not optional. Bonhoeffer's theology of formation, which is the primary focus of this chapter, goes further and defines personhood as our relationship with God and with others; that we have community with God and our social community.

Chapter Five provides the theoretical framework for comprehensive leadership development and the project design. Adult development happens through experiential training where they are challenged to explore the way they make meaning of their experiences. Appropriately designed training sessions can help leaders explore how their experiences may hinder their ability to develop and sustain sincere trusting relationships with those they lead; while building a community within the cohort group. The Universal Leadership Model is a comprehensive leadership model that provided the leadership characteristics taught during the training sessions.

Chapter Six provides the outcome of implementing the Universal Leadership Model. In this chapter, I discuss what happened and how effective the model and the session design was as an intervention based on providing a common language for

leadership development and raising self-awareness. The methodology, project implementation, data collection analysis and triangulation of the data are presented. The chapter concludes with the researcher candidly discussing the limitations of the training.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MINISTRY FOCUS**

True leaders in the church or in the marketplace are called by God. Those who God has chosen to impact, guide and direct the lives of others first need God to impact, guide and direct their lives. Individually we may need different things, but collectively it always starts with building and cultivating a personal and genuine relationship with Christ; without that it is impossible to have genuine and trusting relationships with others, especially those that we are called to shepherd. The Word of God is clear that relationships are important in our service to him. His love comes through relationships.

Through all the stages of my life, leadership was not anything I considered or desired. Leadership meant being set apart from the group, being different and the ridicule and embarrassment that came with it. Documenting my spiritual autobiography gave me an opportunity to look at the events of my life through a different pair of lens. I suspect that the writing and editing of these events as they were re-experienced in this process would have yielded a different product if done just a year earlier. Preparing the spiritual autobiography was revisiting some of the questions that were asked and answered and experiencing some of the emotions that may have come with them. With these new understandings fresh in my heart and mind, I could begin to look at the leaders and the situations within my context group in a different way. There were different questions

available to explore as to what might be going on in the context and a way to explore it.

With a renewed sense of who I have become through my journey, I enter this context with curious anticipation. This chapter outlines how my education, experience and ministry interest converge to define my Doctor of Ministry Project.

### **Ministry Journey**

There is much research on the impact of foster care and adoption on children. Often it is physical trauma that causes a child to be taken from their parents and put into the foster care system. We were not taken from our biological parents, but willingly given away. Our life parents never formally adopted us and never received any federal or state assistance in supporting us but none the less we were in respect foster children. While I was grateful that my physical and emotional needs were being met, studies show that children can find themselves in a conundrum as they struggle with feelings of abandonment and a secret longing to be with their biological family.<sup>1</sup> Who am I and where do I belong? Our parents are our first source of information as our identity is formed. Families are our first relationships and they are where we learn to gauge appropriate behavior. My first set of authorities in my life started with a broken relationship. The fundamental relationship of trust was broken early in my life and unconsciously that seed was planted, took root and sprouted branches that lined various avenues of my life. It had roots in my feelings of inadequacy and doubt. Would these roots strangle the possibilities of my future or would they be deprived of the oxygen they

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<sup>1</sup> Jason Redlock, "Phantom Families," Psychology Today, accessed July 22, 2017, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/199201/phantom-families>.

needed for growth causing them to wither and die? God's amazing love brought sunlight and healing through my relationship with Christ.

In 1997, I became intensely immersed in The Learning Organization culture change project at Detroit Edison.<sup>2</sup> It was more than just a work assignment; it became one of the core building blocks for my personal growth and internal exploration. Painfully, I became new wine in old wineskins. The boundaries of my spiritual, personal and professional life were being stretched. It is one thing to learn with an academic understanding. It is quite another to move information into your heart and to allow it to fuel emotional and spiritual revelation in your world. This revelation came through the Holy Spirit who provided healing to the dark and hidden places in my life. Through prayer and the exploration of my mental models and understanding personal mastery the opportunity emerged for an evolved and more mature answer to the question "who am I"?<sup>3</sup> The regurgitated, unconscious answer I had developed and used to shelter my broken places did not work anymore. Now I had to do the work.

The foundational skill building came through the masterful work of Peter Senge. The Fifth Discipline is the culmination of years of research from faculty members from Harvard and MIT.<sup>4</sup> Senge believes that the only way to truly grow in this new economy is to tap the commitment and capacity of all people and at all levels of the organization. We all want to be a part of an extraordinary team and to do that, we must learn and grow

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of The Learning Organization* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1990), 64.

<sup>3</sup> Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 85.

<sup>4</sup> Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 124.



individually and then together as a team. These technologies, as Senge calls them, provided vital dimensions that need to converge for organizations to innovate and learn.

Mental Models are our deeply held beliefs about how the world works. These deeply ingrained assumptions provide a lens through which we see and judge the world. They demonstrate our identity through our behaviors which are based on our deeply held beliefs about us and the world. Our mental models affect all parts of our lives, particularly how we show up and engage with others. Personal Mastery is a personal level of proficiency in the discipline of continuously clarifying our vision and energies. It is an individual discipline that is required first for our personal development and then for the development of an extraordinary learning team. This work provided me with a bigger context for my experiences.

Mental models provided the language I needed to first understand how some of the beliefs that had served me in the past were not serving me now and how they did not support further growth. Through the pain of the exploration, God began to reveal to me how I had caged myself in by holding on to the pain of my past. I had declared that I would not be like my birth mother and this declaration formed some beliefs about what was appropriate and what was not, through the mind of a child and young adult. Being outspoken was being like her, because she was loud and wanted to be the center of attention whenever I was with her. The way she gained attention was always negative, vulgar and disgusting. Exploring my mental models showed me my belief that being outspoken was negative, vulgar and disgusting. I grew to understand that reflection and exploration were “the work” required for continuous life growth.

Exploring how I internalized my childhood experiences led me to look for connections on how this showed up in my external behaviors. It became apparent that the more comfortable I became looking at myself, the more uncomfortable I felt in my marriage. I had not yet come to understand that I didn't know how to trust or how to be vulnerable in my marriage, only that we were on two different tracks and the relationship was no longer working for me; so, it ended up in divorce, another broken relationship. It was hard, and I went back into my defensive posture. It is here that I began to lean on my spiritual foundation.

The fundamental spiritual foundation came from the Holy Spirit. The grace of the Holy Spirit allowed me a safe place to totally unclothe. With the precision of a laser He illuminated those hidden dark places with a love that reassured me that I was in a safe place to feel the pain and to know that the pain would not overtake me. It was this light that allowed me to see the roots that had taken hold and the connected branches that had shown up in my life. The branch of my gambling addiction that served as my way of coping with life when it did not play by my rules of false perfection. I grew to understand that this root was a familiar spirit that was generational and connected me with my birth mom in a way that I could not pretend away. The fruit of false perfection prevented any real feelings from being felt and any genuine relationships to form. That fruit grew from the branch of insecurity and shame that had brought me right to the brink of a nervous breakdown. I had learned to use my education and experience to serve a dual purpose; first supporting my image of perfection while serving as a wall to keep others from venturing in to discover my multitude of imperfections.

It was through the convergence of these two powerful experiences that I was able to redefine my identity, not through my pain but through God's love. I grew to understand that I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Not perfect in myself, but perfect in Christ Jesus. It was through this inner healing and wholeness that my education and experiences would open opportunities for genuine connection and relationship. How can I be authentic with others when I could not be authentic with myself? God's heart is a tender heart. It is with His tender heart that I am called to serve. I have been provided the healing and the language to be transparent and genuine in the way that I interact and serve others.

In 2000 I began a psychology based, experiential program in Organization Development at The American University. The core of the program was understanding human behavior in organizations and the systems and processes that impact them. The cohort-based program built a community of scholar practitioners who worked through their own issues as part of the two-year program. It was an amazing experience and continued the work that had been started in my Senge experience; emphasizing that how we show up matters. Each time we met, there were sessions deliberately designed to provide feedback to the students and an environment for us to explore how our beliefs were driving our behaviors within this community. I went on to become an organization development consultant in the utility, home health care, community development, automotive and insurance industries. In 2006, one of my consulting clients asked me to join their organization. In 2008 I accepted the President and CEO role of this one-hundred-person organization. I integrated these concepts and tools into my daily meetings and conversations and watched the organization become profitable and the leadership

team grow in effectiveness in leading people. My education and these experiences qualify me to conduct my Doctor of Ministry project.

### **The Context**

Bishop Frank Jones was called to ministry in his early twenties and came up through the Pentecostal denomination. As he grew and gained revelation of God's Word some of the Pentecostal teachings were no longer in line with what he believed. The boundaries of the religious rules upheld by the organizational assembly that he was raised in became confining and restrictive in his spiritual life. With much prayer and direction from the Holy Spirit, Bishop Jones left the covering of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (P.A.W.). Bishop Jones and his wife founded Emmanuel Covenant Church International in Battle Creek Michigan, where they served as Senior Pastors for over twenty-three years.

In early 2000 there were several families that began to sense there was more to church, than what they were getting at their churches. Many of these families had been saved and reared in the Pentecostal denomination, but there was something missing. Some were raising questions about the "us only" teachings; that only those baptized in Jesus name only and only those who possessed the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues would be saved. Some began to be dismayed about the hierarchy of leadership that lacked relationship and connections. Others began to hear Kingdom teachings and that the fivefold ministry was very much a part of today's church. One of those families was the Cole family.

The Cole family served in leadership at their church in Highland Park Michigan for over twenty years. They served under the first pastor of the church who they respected and honored. When he passed away, he left the church to his son-in-law who was eventually removed from his pastoral position, bringing in a third pastor. Through these transitions, Mr. and Mrs. Cole were sensing that there was more, and they went into prayer for direction from God. During their time in the P.A.W. they became familiar with Bishop Jones' ministry and were very impressed with him and the depth of the word he delivered. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, when they left their church in Highland Park, they wanted to sit under Bishop Jones. Bishop Jones taught Kingdom and covenant which were very different teachings than the P.A.W.

Bishop Jones, still pastoring his church in Battle Creek planted Destiny Covenant Church in Ann Arbor Michigan, about forty-five minutes from Troy where the Cole family lived. They were delighted to do exchange their two-hour drive to Battle Creek for the forty-five-minute drive to Ann Arbor. The Cole family attended Destiny Church for a little over a year, going to Bible study and Sunday service whenever possible. In May 2003 the Cole family and about six other families entered into covenant with Bishop Jones and he began teaching Bible Study at the Cole home. Believing that the Lord was beginning to move them in their physical and spiritual lives, Bishop inquired about a location in the Detroit area where he might plant a church. On February 1, 2004 the founding families of Embassy Covenant Church launched their Sunday morning service as the Troy Community Center. Bishop soon relinquished pastoring at Destiny and enduring the two-hour drive in Michigan weather, Bishop and Pastor Jones pastored both Emmanuel Covenant and Embassy Covenant churches for almost four years. They

eventually left Emmanuel Covenant Church to join Embassy Covenant Church as their full-time pastors. Embassy Covenant Church International is a non-demonical church that has been in existence for twelve years.

Bishop Jones strongly believes in covenant relationships. These relationships are the foundation of contracts, promises, stipulations and responsibilities in the Christian life. The biblical words most often translated "covenant" are *berit* [tyir.B] in the Old Testament (appearing about 280 times) and *diatheke* [diaqhvk] in the New Testament (appearing at least 33 times).<sup>5</sup> Sincere covenant relationships are genuine, authentic relationships. In the Book of Matthew, Jesus gives an example of true relationships. Who is my mother and my brother he asked in Matthew 12:48? Who are the people that I have that true, sincere and authentic relationship with? We learn here that it is not the title of the relationship that proves the covenant, it is the quality of the relationship. How do we establish true covenant relationships in the church? Is it possible, truly possible?

Embassy is a congregation of about 450 members with around 300 attending most Sunday mornings. At the top of the structure is a three-person board of directors that has high level oversight of the ecclesial direction of the church. The Presbytery Board is the board of internal pastors and elders appointed by Bishop Smith who have oversight and provide council on the weekly ecclesial issues and concerns of the church. Bishop Smith is the chairman of this board. Bishop Smith serves and President and Pastor Letha as Vice President of the Executive Board. This five-member board provide financial and business oversight for the church. They are responsible for approving the annual budget and all corporate activities and events. I serve as the church's business manager and have

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<sup>5</sup> "God's Covenant with Man," Bible Study Tools, accessed August 18, 2017, [www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com).

overall responsibilities for daily financials, business office and operations as well as corporate and ministry processes. I report to the executive pastor who is a member of the executive board.

My husband and I joined Embassy about three years ago. Within two months of joining we were both scheduled with individual meetings with Bishop. After inquiring about my background and sharing his background and history, Bishop quickly saw a need for my skills and experience in the kingdom and specifically at Embassy. We discussed his need to bring more structure and process to the ministries and his desire for me to meet with all the ministry leads to understand their roles and needs better. The outcome he desired was for me to consult with these leads, determine what processes and procedures would support a more effective running of their ministries and to report back to him my findings.

Before I started the work with the ministries, Bishop requested that I make a presentation to the Presbytery Board. I prepared and made an hour presentation to the Presbytery Board. This was my first exposure to these leaders and they all seemed to agree on the process work that was being recommended. No one offered any exception to the plan, nor did they have suggestions on other things that may be part of their concern about effective growth of the ministry. I challenged them in the presentation to consider if they were willing to made difficult changes, if they were recommended; including removing leaders from their roles. As I looked around the room at the body language before the response, there was some hesitation from many of the board members. Bishop spoke for the group, confirming that I should meet and present my

findings and recommendations to him and they were willing to what was required. The next step was to speak to the ministry leaders and the annual Leadership Summit.

The Leadership Summit was an annual leadership meeting for all leaders including the Presbytery Board, the Executive Board, department heads and ministry leads. There were about forty people in attendance. The Summit was held at a fieldhouse that had arcade games and adventures. We had a separate meeting room where there were six presentations scheduled. Between the presentations were team building games where teams explored the fieldhouse to fulfill team challenges. It was intended to be somewhat educational, but lighthearted and fun. My presentation was not lighthearted or fun; but reflected my serious desire to improve the process and systems at Embassy.

My presentation started off with information about Embassy's growth over the past five years. I reviewed the number of members who joined and the number of members at the end of each year; which showed that people were becoming members but that many members were also leaving. I engaged them in the conversation about why that might be and what might be done to reduce the number leaving. There were a few responses, including one conversation between two people disputing who was responsible for a part of the new members process. That encounter opened the door for me to ask the group to commit to work with me over the next six months on clarifying and defining their team processes. There was good group engagement and conversation which included some push back as to the need for this work. Some of the leaders were offended that a new comer was talking about a need for change in their church. This challenge did not come as a surprise because there is some level of resistance to change



in every organization. Every organization, including the church has its own culture and norms that will, at some level, resist change.

Over the next nine months, I met with eight ministry leads one-on-one and then with their teams to discuss their needs and challenges. This process accomplished a few things. First, it allowed me to begin building relationships with the leaders. Some of the meetings were at a local coffee shop, restaurant or at my home. I listened to the leaders as they shared information about themselves, their ministry and their church. I listened, not to come up with the answer, but I listened to understand. I asked questions and shared with them some of my background and experiences so that they could get to know me too. Process and structure were a challenge, but maybe not the biggest one.

It became clear that systems and process would improve the effective and efficiency of all the ministries, but more importantly a bigger challenge was leadership. Leaders are asked to serve for only one year, but many have served multiple one-year terms, some stretching five years or longer. Many faced the challenge of recruiting members to serve and building and developing teams with no training or development in those areas. As I began to work with leaders to design processes and put them in place, another leadership challenge emerged. We would agree on a process, document it and agree to an implementation schedule. When the target date came, nothing would happen. In cases, the leaders did not follow the process themselves which encouraged their teams to do the same. In ministries where the leader did adopt the process there was no accountability for team members who did not. Some ministry leaders and team members regularly made commitments that they did not keep, and this appeared to be an acceptable cultural norm. Meetings often started late with what appeared to be little

concern. Often times the leader would be the reason for a late start and there was no acknowledgment of their tardiness or what may have been perceived as a lack of respect for the other attendees' time. This also appeared to be an acceptable cultural norm.

In one situation, I circled back to the leader to check-in with how the process changes were working. She was excited about the changes, implemented them and believed that they would make their ministry work easier and serve the people of Embassy better. What she found was that her team didn't agree with her and several of them continued to operate in the old way. When she went to them to inquire why, the conversation did not go well. The ministry volunteer resented her follow-up and broke down in tears from the stress of the conversation. The ministry leader was surprised but admitted that she had heard that the volunteer was going through a personal situation, but she wasn't sure, and she didn't want to ask her about it. She thought maybe her timing was off and she should not have asked her about the change or maybe waited to implement the change. I asked, "what kind of relationship do you have with her?" The leader replied that she didn't know her that well even though they both had been in the church for a while. There was no relationship between them and I wondered why.

There was also a lack of relationship with the community. Troy Michigan is a northeastern suburb of the urban central city of Detroit. Troy Michigan was officially incorporated in 1955. It has a total city area of 33.64 square miles of which 33.47 square miles is land and 0.17 square miles is water.<sup>6</sup> It is located in Oakland County Michigan and is considered part of Metropolitan Detroit. In 2007, the estimated median income for

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<sup>6</sup> "Troy, Michigan," City Town Info, accessed July 20, 2016, <http://www.citytowninfo.com/places/michigan/troy>.

a household in Troy was \$84,330 and the median income for a family was \$101,271.<sup>7</sup> Historically, Troy has seen significant population growth as the population grew from less than 20,000 in 1960 to over 83,000 in 2015. In 2010, with almost 81,000 in population, 74% were white, 19% were Asian and 4% African American. The median age in the city was 41.8 years and 49.3% of the residents were male and 50.7% were female.

The Troy Community Center is in the center of the city and provides a premier location for the church. Embassy is predominately African American, with non-white membership representing less than five percent. Part of the Embassy vision is to be a multicultural church, but it has been challenged to make this a reality. The church location and the population demographics of Troy offers an opportunity for local growth and diversity.

One of the challenges lies with the lack of community outreach in the Troy area. An analysis of the demographics of the Embassy membership shows more of a regional church than a community church with a significant number of families living outside of Oakland County and the metropolitan Detroit area. There are no announcements or advertisements in the local papers or intentional fellowship opportunities with the local community. A church banner outside the door of the sanctuary at the community center is the single sign that a church is in the building. Twelve years of opportunities to engage and enter into relationship with the local Troy community have been lost.

I completed the organizational assessment understanding the top three things that were impeding growth and contributing to the ineffectiveness of the ministries. This

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<sup>7</sup> "Troy, Michigan," Wikipedia, accessed July 20, 2016, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troy,\\_Michigan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troy,_Michigan).

assessment was made from an operational perspective and not from an ecclesial perspective. I was not focused, for the most part on the content of the ministry work but rather on the processes used to deliver the service and in specific cases the ability of the people responsible for delivering the services. The first major item was not having their own building. Embassy has conducted its Sunday service at the Troy Community center for the past twelve years. In addition to the standard Sunday morning processes, there are the additional responsibilities of transporting and setting up the “environment” at the Troy Community Center. Men of Embassy set-up sound systems, instruments and stage props every Sunday morning before 10:00 service. The rooms are rented for a specific period of time and the service and environment breakdown has to be completed in that amount of time. Fellowship and sharing is often diminished because we must vacate the space as the center prepares for the next event. This impedes some of the organic relationship building and connections that happen during Sunday mornings. The Embassy leadership continue to look for a church building in the Troy area.

The second item is the lack of systems and defined processes. Embassy has an Operations Manual that is written in a very technical fashion, is outdated and has not been shared with many of the leaders. The processes that are in the document have evolved over time where there is not clear understanding by the ministry leads of the current process. It also became clear that some leaders like it that way. Ambiguity allows leaders and teams to represent the process in the way that works best for them. There was no one who was responsible for the daily processes of the organization. The Executive Pastor, who all the ministries report up through, was ultimately the referee when conflicts occurred between ministries. This is a very reactive approach and focused

on problem solving, not problem prevention. As I came aboard and began to put processes in place, there was noticeable resistance from the leaders.

The third and highest leverage item is leadership. As is often the case in churches, Embassy has elevated individuals into leadership roles who have no prior experience as leaders. Often, leadership taught in the corporate workplace focuses on external skills and behaviors. What came up time and time again from leaders was how their team members did not follow through on their commitments. In talking with second level leaders, they had the same complaints. More times than not, individuals were not confronted when they did not meet their responsibilities and keep their commitments. What prevents leaders from addressing these concerns in the church? Is this a covenant church when leaders and teams have broken relationships?

The Executive Pastor's approach to this concern was to focus on it at one of the leadership monthly meetings. He did a Power Point presentation on why follow through was important and demonstrated it through a video on golfing. The video focused on the swing of the golfer and follow through that is needed for accurate ball trajectory. He then divided the group into teams and let each team practice this lesson through a video golf game. The team with the best score meant that they had the best follow through in their swing. This was followed by a discussion on follow through and team work. Follow through was identified as the isolated problem and this was the leadership team training.

### **The Synergy**

Miles Monroe in his book *The Spirit of Leadership* goes extensively into the attitudes and internal thoughts and beliefs that create a genuine leader.<sup>8</sup> I learned through my journey that my early life experiences had a long reaching impact on my development. Seeds are planted in our subconsciousness that are watered and grown at their own pace throughout a lifetime. We do get opportunities, as we get older to uncover some and their influence on our development and to make decisions to be different. These opportunities often look more like challenges or full blown crisis in our lives. Sometimes when life just is not working, and we come to the end of ourselves, we surrender to a loving and caring God to catch us in our fall. It was only through the stress of being broken that I was able to begin to heal. Without inner healing, I was not able to be in genuine relationship with God or with others. Through the journey of inner healing, I was able to first become self-aware and then accepting of myself as a flawed human but perfect in God's sight. Experiencing the love of the Holy Spirit in a place of personal devastation was a faith builder and game changer in my life. Through prayer, fasting and journaling, I was able to rewrite the meaning of my experiences through the eyes and with the tender heart of a loving God. I was able to release the energy that was attached to the experiences as the Holy Spirit provided a healing salve in exchange.

The personal introspection and exploration was also important. Through my master's program and the Learning Organization experience, I was equipped with the understanding, language and tools to detach my experiences from the meaning I had

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<sup>8</sup> Miles Munroe, *The Spirit of Leadership: Cultivating the Attitudes that Influence Human Action* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2005), 184.

given them and explore how meaning was being applied to my current experiences. This is lifetime work.

The survey of the context has brought me to the belief that the Embassy leaders are where I was many years ago. I believe they have an intellectual understanding of what covenant is and what it means but struggle with their ability to enter into deep relationships in general and specifically with those they have been charged to lead. In addition to this, my hypothesis is that they also lack the skill to maneuver in these kinds of relationships. Some people are naturally introspective and curious; I'm one of those people. It is here that I see myself in the leaders of Embassy at this cross-section of their lives and mine. My education and significant experience in my own life discovery has provided me with the language, skills and empathy to complete this Doctor of Ministry project. The way that my master's program was designed to build community by allowing the students to explore together the things we learned, which forced us to share our personal lives with each other. Experiential learning provides a safe environment to explore some of our deeply held beliefs about how the world works and invites others on our journey of exploration.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS**

In addressing the issues at Embassy Covenant Church International, the focus is on the impact of ineffective leadership on the congregation and the church ministries. Upon joining the Embassy congregation, Bishop Smith discussed my background and experience. Bishop Smith was very clear that the Organizational Development experience and specifically the elements of strategy development, process definition and leadership were skills needed in the kingdom and specifically at Embassy.

Congregations are groups of people who have come together to serve and minister through their chosen local church. Some members at Embassy were open to embrace a new comer, one who was being provided great access to the inner workings of the church ministries. Other members viewed my insertion as an intrusion that was welcomed to worship and bask in the powerful word being delivered each Sunday, but not to explore the strategies and processes that would affect the leaders and the way they were running their ministries. The initial focus was non-personal and looked to understand how their ministries served their specific audiences. That endeavor first focused on the teams and how they understood their ministry and if the church was providing them what they needed for ministry success. This inevitably led to the question of the effectiveness of the leadership both at the ministry level and at the highest levels in the organization. It



was at this point in the journey that the question of effective leadership was introduced into the conversation.

### **The Beginning of Leadership**

God has made himself known to us through many of our human lenses. These dimensions of God became clearer when God, through Jesus walked among us. As believers, we know Jesus to be the only begotten Son of God and that our salvation is assured because of the finished work on Golgotha through our faith in that completed work. Some toil but many depend on Jesus, the healer, to provide restoration of our physical bodies and mental faculties as we walk this human experience. Many endeavor to emulate his life and follow his teachings without question because we know his role as Rabbi.

We also know Jesus as a leader through servanthood. In Isaiah the forty-second chapter, we read about the attitudes and inner motives that the coming Messiah would demonstrate as the ideal servant leader of the Lord. Jesus fulfilled the prophecy by emptying Himself of divine prerogative (Phil 2:7) and became dependent on His Heavenly Father. Total dependency on the Father is what qualifies us to lead. In his book, J. Oswald Sanders contrasts a natural leader to a spiritual leader with a stark difference in focus. As spiritual leaders our confidence, our humble ambition, our delight, love and dependency is on God.<sup>1</sup>

God is a covenant God. Many biblical leaders and situations demonstrate his heart through the covenant relationship. God's inexhaustible flow of love through us is

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<sup>1</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: A Commitment to Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007), 29-51.

the only way to be in true and genuine relationship with others. In as many ways as God has shown us effective leadership through the establishment and keeping of covenant, he has shown us ineffective leadership where covenant is not established and nurtured and as the only medium that can establish leaders and engage followers.

The pericope of Exodus 3:1-4:17 is the commissioning and elevation of Moses to be God's representative leader to bring Israel out of Egypt. It will serve as the underpinnings for the argument that effective leadership is only possible through genuine relationships that have their foundation with the leader's relationship with God. The question that will be explored is whether the ineffective leadership at Embassy Covenant Church is due to their inability to build covenant relationships with the people they lead. The exploration and understanding of the calling and building of Moses as God's leader will serve as the foundation for comparison with context current needs as well as my own journey to leadership.

### **Old Testament**

Exodus 3:1-4:17 is appropriate because it connects with the feeling of unworthiness and the continued desire to use it as an excuse to reason with God to call someone else to lead. It expertly shows how God entered into a very intimate relationship with Moses, as he has done with other Christians, to lead his people. God, who knew us before we were formed in our mother's womb, patiently orchestrates those who are called by His Name to the fulfillment of his purpose:

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it

was not consumed. And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I am who I am." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I am has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, 'I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.'" And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.' But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.'" The Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff." And he said, "Throw it on the

ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. But the Lord said to Moses, “Put out your hand and catch it by the tail”— so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— “that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.” Again, the Lord said to him, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. Then God said, “Put your hand back inside your cloak.” So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. “If they will not believe you,” God said, “or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”

But Moses said to the Lord, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.” Then the Lord said to him, “Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.” But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.” Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and he said, “Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him. And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs.”<sup>2</sup>

### *Historical Element*

The common English title Exodus is derived from the Vg [*Liber*] *Exodus*, which received it from the OL. This, in turn, was inherited from the Gk *exodos*, abbreviated from a fuller *exodos aigyptou*, “The Departure from Egypt.” This name, descriptive of the main theme of the book, reflects an ancient Hebrew title current among the Jews of Palestine and Alexandria: *sēper yēšî`āt mišrayim*, “The Book of the Departure from

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<sup>2</sup> Biblical citations within this document are from the English Standard Version unless stated otherwise.

Egypt.”<sup>3</sup> A survey of the context of the passage is appropriate. The Book of Exodus also preeminently lays the foundations for a theology of God’s revelation of his person. One of the most reassuring messages through the book is that God remembers what he promised, and God did deliver. Few books of the Old Testament are as important historically and theologically as the Book of Exodus.

The book opens with the enslavement of Israel. The history of the partnership and relationship between Israel and Egypt has been lost. Joseph, and all those from his generation, are dead; and the new Pharaoh has no special regard for Joseph or his contributions to the survival and prosperity of Egypt. Over these prosperous times in Egypt, Israel has multiplied greatly, in fulfillment of Elohim’s word to Abraham (Genesis 13:14) and the new Egyptian leader viewed Israel as a potential threat to their security. To neutralize the threat, Pharaoh forced Israel into bondage and made them to serve Egypt with hard labor. These harsh times did not impede Israel’s growth as they multiplied even the more.

Moses was born the third child to Amram and Jochebed who were Levites according to Exodus 6:20. Early chapters of Exodus disclose the treacherous times in which Moses was born as Pharaoh had issued an edict to have every Hebrew male-child put to death. This was an attempt to systematically reduce the growing population and their emanant threat. The Hebrew midwives feared God more than Pharaoh, so they continued to deliver male infants against Pharaoh’s decree; it is under these circumstances Moses was born. To safeguard her son’s life, Jochebed placed her son in a small covered boat and strategically placed him in the wetland plants where he would not

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<sup>3</sup> N. M. Sama, “Exodus,” in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 690.

be harmed. While out with her handmaidens, Moses was discovered by Pharaoh's daughter, who solicits one of her handmaidens to retrieve him from the river and instructs the handmaiden to find a Hebrew woman to nurse him. Pharaoh's daughter did not realize that God had designed the perfect situation for Moses' sister to retrieve him and for his mother to care for him. It was through this request that Miriam reunited Moses with his mother, Jochebed. Until Moses was weaned from his mother's breastmilk, he was allowed to live with his mother and father. This provided them the only opportunity to teach him about the God of his fathers.<sup>4</sup> This narrative about the birth of Moses witnesses to the fact that God had chosen Moses before he was born.

Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and was provided with all the educational advantages that Egypt had to offer. Although not mentioned in Exodus, when Stephen was addressing the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem he refers to Moses as having been instructed in Egyptian wisdom (Acts 7:22).<sup>5</sup> Moses was being groomed to be an Egyptian leader even with his Hebrew heritage. From his seat of privilege Moses saw the experiences of his people. He saw Egyptian leadership and the relationship of slave to leader from a different vantage point than the Hebrew people who lived under Pharaoh's harsh treatment (1:10). The dichotomy of nature verses nurture in the life of Moses is further developed though the scriptures.

Over time Moses became aware of his Hebrew descent and the burden of his people. At forty (Acts 7:23) Moses impetuously struck and killed an Egyptian beating a

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<sup>4</sup> Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 309.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel J. Schultz, *The Old Testament Speaks: A Complete Survey of Old Testament History and Literature* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 50-51.

fellow Hebrew. This was his first attempt at delivering his people—acting alone and in secret and relying on his own strength and wisdom—and though it failed miserably, it certainly shows the strength of Moses’ sentiments on behalf of his people.<sup>6</sup>

Understanding the consequence of what he had done, he buried the body believing that no one had witnessed the killing. The next day, he went forth to settle another dispute, one between two of his own people but was rebuffed by his kinsmen for being a murderer and meddler in their affairs. As compassionate and noble as his actions may have been, they put his life at risk and he was forced to flee Egypt. This is the transition out of the first trimester (forty years) of Moses life. It represents the death of the Egyptian Moses.

Here we transition into the second trimester (next forty years) of Moses life as he fled Egypt and went to Midian; where he encountered more scenes of injustice. While sitting down by a well he encountered the seven daughters of a Midian priest, there to draw water to fill their trough and care for their father’s flock. His instinct for intervening against injustice and his desire to right wrongs surfaced as he defended the women from shepherds attempting to drive the women away. Moses’ response affirms that Moses was physically vigorous enough to chase off a group of shepherds and then complete the work that the seven women had come to do. Certainly, Moses’ generous and helpful character shows as he protects people he hardly knew and underlines that his behaviors were being driven based on principal.<sup>7</sup> Moses is invited to the home of Reuel, the priest of Midian and the father of Zipporah; who would later become his wife and the mother of their first child Gershom.

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<sup>6</sup> D. K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2 (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 95.

<sup>7</sup> Stuart, *Exodus*, 99.

The king who had sought to kill Moses died, yet there was no relief for the Israelites. They groaned in their slavery and cried out for help. God heard them and was concerned about his people.

The transition into Chapter Three of Exodus begins the third trimester of his life (third forty years). The first trimester represented the forty years in Egypt. The Moses of wealth and privilege dies during the second forty years where Moses is figuratively buried in the wilderness of Midian. It is here in the beginning of the third trimester that God “resurrects” Moses from the dead place in the desert into his chosen leader of Israel.

### *Literary Characteristics*

Considering the literary characteristics and structure of Exodus is appropriate. Chapters Three and Four of Exodus follow a literary pattern well attested both in the Bible and in other literature of the ancient Near East: the theophany form. This form was apparently long established in the culture of Moses and the Israelites. H. Gunkel identified theophany in general terms in the stories of the patriarchs in Genesis and a number of scholars have advanced the study of the form and its component parts.<sup>8</sup>

J. Kenneth Kuntz in *The Self-Revelation of God*, defines the theophany form as a temporal, partial and intentionally allusive self-disclosure initiated by the sovereign deity at a particular place, the reality of which evokes the convulsion of nature and the fear and dread of man, and whose unfolding emphasizes visual and audible aspects according to a recognized literary form.<sup>9</sup> Some, like Gene Tucker believe that this expanded definition

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<sup>8</sup> Stuart, *Exodus*, 106-107.

<sup>9</sup> J. Kenneth Kuntz, *The Self-Revelation of God* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1967), 67.



is too broad and argues that what it gains in inclusion from the broader definition, it sacrifices some depth and precision.<sup>10</sup> The writer does not support that belief and will use this expanded definition with additional modifications.

Niehaus argues that the Sinai theophany is the touchstone for evaluating prior and subsequent theophanies. He argues that the Sinai event is of central importance because of God's appearance at Sinai in the clouds and the imparting of the law and that he will come again on the clouds of heaven to judge those who have broken the law. It is for this reason that Niehaus refers to all biblical theophanies as "Sinai-like" or Sinaitic theophanies. Niehaus modifies Kuntz's definition and arrives at the general structure elements of a full Sinaitic theophany of the chosen text this way:

1) Introductory description in the third person 3:1–4a; 2) Deity's utterance of the name of the (mortal) addressee 3:4b; 3) Response of the addressee 3:4c; 4) Deity's self-asseveration 3:5–6; 5) His quelling of human fear 3:7; 6) Assertion of his gracious presence 3:8; 7) The *hieros logos* addressed to the particular situation 3:9–10; 8) Inquiry or protest by the addressee 3:11; 9) Continuation of the *hieros logos* with perhaps some repetition of elements 4, 5, 6, 7, and/or 8: *hieros logos* 3:12, protest 3:13, *hieroi logoi* 3:14–22, protest 4:1, *hieroi logoi* 4:2–9, protest 4:10, *hieros logos* 4:11–12, protest 4:13 *hieroi logoi* 4:14–17 and 10) Concluding description in the third person 4:18.<sup>11</sup>

The theophany structure will serve as the first form of analysis of the passage.

### Analysis

The last encounter with God was over four hundred years earlier when God appeared to Jacob at Beersheba (Gen 46:1-4). In the text, God has called Moses into relationship with him and has done so by triggering Moses' curiosity about something

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<sup>10</sup> Gene M. Tucker, "Self-Revelation of God" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 86, no. 3 (1967): 353-354, accessed August 1, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>11</sup> Stuart, *Exodus*, 108.

which is out of the ordinary in the world, an unconsumed burning bush. God, having heard the cries of his people, chooses this first encounter to be with Moses as he tends to Jethro's sheep on the far side of the desert, where he came to Horeb. Verse One fulfills the theophany form one: it introduces and describes Moses in the third person. It is here that Moses meets God and he begins the resurrection of Moses from an isolated sheep herder into God's leader. Horeb and Sinai are both used to describe a mountain peak and a mountain area around it. The Hebrew word Horeb means dryness and desolation.<sup>12</sup> Some commentators point to shepherding as an idealized Old Testament image for becoming a leader. This shepherd tended sheep that were owned by Jethro and he would be called to lead people belonging to God.<sup>13</sup>

In this ordinary wilderness location, Moses was carrying out the routine tasks involved in caring for the flock. The "Angel of the Lord" appears in a fire theophany; theophany form element one. In this instance God used the appearance of an unconsumed burning bush to make himself visible to Moses. God has been represented with the use of fire in various parts of the Old Testament. A pot of fire is how God represented himself in his covenant with Abraham (Gen 15:17) and later with fire to Elijah (1Kgs 19:6) and to Ezekiel as a fiery shape (Ezek 1:8).<sup>14</sup> To lead the Israelites through the wilderness, he showed himself as a pillar of fire (13:21). Some have suggested that what we have in fire is the revelation of the brilliant, burning glory of God.

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<sup>12</sup> John L. Mackay, *Exodus: A Mentor Commentary* (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2001).

<sup>13</sup> William T. Miller, *The Book of Exodus: Question by Question* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009), 24.

<sup>14</sup> R. Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and D. Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 42.

The image of fire conveys the idea of purity, holiness, power and majesty.<sup>15</sup> Specifically, some have suggested that it represented the situation of Israel in Egypt: like the bush, the people of God were enveloped in the flames of hardship, cruelty and oppression, yet they were not consumed. God was keeping his people alive.<sup>16</sup> The word for thorn bush *seneh* in Hebrew is used only twice in the Old Testament occurring again in Deuteronomy 33:16. Miller, in his book *The Book of Exodus: Question by Question* argues that it is not the fire that is the miracle because some species of thorny desert plants can spontaneously ignite when there is severe heat and drought.<sup>17</sup> Miller asserts that the miracle here is not the fire but that the bush is not consumed by flames. Verse Four confirms this as God called to Moses from within the bush. Fire in the life of Moses and God's people represents all these things about both God and his people. Embassy is representative of Miller's assertion, it is not the fire that represents the glory of God, but the unconsumed spirit amid the fire.

Jesus is at the center of Embassy Covenant Church. The power and anointing of the Gospel preached illuminates who God is in Bishop Smith's life and in the vision and mission of Embassy. The core, the inner foundation of Embassy is represented by the "unconsumed bush," not the fire. The fire for Embassy represents the automatic combustion of flames from the thorny bush due to extreme heat. Embassy has sought to design systems and processes that support effective ministry work. As those systems have come into place, the effects have been diminished due to immature leadership and

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<sup>15</sup> I. D. Campbell, *Opening up Exodus* (Leominster, UK: Day One Publications, 2006), 31.

<sup>16</sup> Campbell, *Opening up Exodus*, 33.

<sup>17</sup> Miller, *The Book of Exodus*, 25.

ineffective leaders. The friction between the systems and the immaturity of the leadership have brought about a fire of chaos that threatens to consume the church. The leadership's inability to build genuine relationships and the lack of skill to lead through them fuels the chaos and provides continuing fuel for the fire. The Holy Spirit dwells in the center and is not consumed but the burning fire of confusion prevents the church from growing through the effective delivery of the ministry and discipleship. The foundation of covenant begins with our personal relationship with Christ, just as Moses covenant with God was the foundation of his ability to lead. If that connection is broken, there cannot be strong and sincere relationships and effective leadership of others.

The term used in Verse Two *mal'āk Yahweh* usually translates “the Angel of the Lord” and appears sixty-seven times in the Old Testament. This is the only occurrence in Exodus. *Mal'āk yahweh* is a genitive construction and according to the rule of constructs, both elements must be either definite or indefinite.<sup>18</sup> Since the proper noun “Yahweh” is intrinsically definite, the noun that precedes it would also then be definite. Following this logic of genitive construction this phrase could not mean “an angel of the Lord” but must connote greater definiteness which would translate “the Angel of the Lord.” Campbell goes on to suggest that the most recognized constructs by Hebrew grammarians is the appositional construct, that is the form of construct that uses the second word to identify the first. This would make the translation of *mal'āk Yahweh* “the Angel Yahweh” or “Angel Yahweh.” This certainly does not imply that Yahweh is merely an angel but is in line with other biblical passages where under special revelatory encounters with humans a certain angel on occasion can take the identity of Yahweh. This case is true in Gen

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<sup>18</sup> Stuart, *Exodus*, 138.

12:7; 17:1; and 18:1. In these passages an angel *mal'āk* is either called “the Lord” or becomes recognized as the Yahweh. Exodus Three and Four are the strongest passages for identifying the “angel of the Lord” as the Lord because of the way that it continually refers to the individual first identified as the “angel of the Lord” as both Lord and God. This was God coming to deepen his relationship with his servant Moses for the purpose of fulfilling his promise to Israel. Moses was afraid to look at God, so he hid his face.<sup>19</sup>

With Moses' attention, God immediately began to reveal himself to Moses. God calls Moses' name twice, arresting the attention of the shepherd, but more importantly using it as an expression of endearment, affection and friendship.<sup>20</sup> God shows his affection for Moses from his beginning statement in the encounter.

Even before God identified himself, he began to teach Moses about the holy nature of his presence. When God descended on Mount Sinai, the mountain itself became holy because of his presence. Removing one's sandals was a sign of respect toward a superior, or toward a person's dwelling. Sandals were often removed before entering someone's home, or before entering a sacred place like a temple.<sup>21</sup>

Verse Six in theophany form five is particularly noteworthy because of the precise way that God reveals to Moses in whose presence he stands; in the deity's self-asseveration Sinaitic theophany structure. The designation ‘God of your father’ recalls the way in which God introduced himself to the patriarchs (Gen. 26:24; 28:13; 46:3) and would be a title with which Moses would be familiar.<sup>22</sup> It also emphasized Moses'

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<sup>19</sup> Campbell, *Opening up Exodus*, 38.

<sup>20</sup> J. E. Smith, *The Pentateuch* (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 1993), 252-253.

<sup>21</sup> J. M. Freeman and H. J. Chadwick, *Manners and Customs of the Bible* (North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1998), 101-102.

personal membership of the covenant people. God's desire was to evoke memories of the past and to engage Moses through his family circle. Yahweh's faithful provision had been known over all the generations since Abraham and it would continue to his chosen people. It is God's commissioning and endearing relationship with Moses that will bring God's provision to Israel. In quelling the human fear, God reiterates his care and concern for his people; his connection with their affliction and his promise to deliver them from Egypt to Canaan. God is no longer a distant reality for Moses. He is a personal God.

Verses Seven through Ten begin a conversation between God and Moses that continues through the end of the pericope. Verse Seven recalls the words used in Exodus 2:23-25, where the Lord remembered his covenant with the patriarchs. God announces his compassion with three verbs: I have seen... I have heard them... and I am concerned. The Hebrew infinitive absolute construction (*rā' ōh rā' ūtī*) connotes the sense "I have carefully watched" or "I have paid very close attention to," thus indicating the intensity of God's interest in the misery of his people.<sup>23</sup>

The wording in Verse Eight is characteristic of biblical passages related to theophany from six where God asserts his gracious presence. God declares that he has come to deliver his people from the tyranny of Egypt. The Lord explicitly says that he has come down because the cries of his people have reached him and that he has seen their plight. After more than four hundred years of silence, God breaks it because of his love for his people. He came to provide a vision of his promise to Israel. God promised them a productive and prosperous land with abundantly rich resources. This detail of

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<sup>22</sup> David C. Deuel, "God at Sinai: Covenant and Theology in the Bible and Ancient Near East," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 7, no. 1 (1996): 132-133, accessed August 5, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>23</sup> Stuart, *Exodus*, 117.

God's vision for his people was so important that he repeats it again in Verse Seventeen. The phrase a land flowing with milk means that Canaan was ideal for raising goats and cows. Feeding on good pastureland the goats, sheep, and cows were full of milk. Flowing with honey means that the bees were busy making honey. Milk and honey suggested agricultural prosperity. This is the first of numerous references in the Old Testament to the "land flowing with milk and honey."<sup>24</sup> God is clearly in charge of this situation and all he requires of Moses is to go. God is sending him to lead Israel out of Egypt. God goes on in the next two verses to address the situation at hand.

In the theophany structure Verse Eleven and Twelve begin the first of a continuation of inquiry or protest by the addressee (Moses) and a continuation of the *hieros logos*. These pairs of elements take the narrative all the way to 4:17. Some commentary writers assert that Moses was not trying to get out of the job Yahweh was calling him to perform. At his point, he was merely being mannerly according to the dictates of his culture.<sup>25</sup> Others believe that from this very point, Moses was shocked by God's words and immediately Moses objected because of his lack of ability and his lack of authority. The word used here is *mī'ānōkî* and is used two other times in the Old Testament (I Sam 18:18, 2 Sam 7:18) where in each instance it is part of expressing polite acceptance of an honor rather than as an attempt to decline the responsibility.<sup>26</sup> The encounter of prophets called by God have often experienced inner turmoil. God called them to tasks that seemed to stretch them beyond their abilities. Their admonitions,

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<sup>24</sup> J. D. Hannah, "Exodus," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 112.

<sup>25</sup> Stuart, *Exodus*, 118.

<sup>26</sup> Hannah, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 114.

threats, and calls for repentance were not messages that they spoke easily or the community heard gladly (Jer 1:6; Exek 3:9).<sup>27</sup> Moses faces these same difficulties. Being polite may be part of the narrative, but Moses is undergoing an inner struggle as he stands in the presence of the God of the bush. Moses doubts his ability to measure up and through this doubt questions the success of the divine plan (3:13; 4:1). Here at the bush, Moses is given two daunting tasks: take on the Pharaoh of Egypt and bring freedom to a people who had been in captivity for over four hundred years.

Verse Thirteen continues with the repetition of inquiry in asking “What is your name”? Hoffmeier does not believe that Moses is demanding to know God’s name but rather the character behind that name. God’s answer supports this, because he does not say “Yahweh” but interprets the name “I AM WHO I AM,”<sup>28</sup> Conversely, Poole believes that is exactly what Moses is asking. God had a variety of names in this culture and he wanted to know the name he should use to distinguish God from false gods, and the name that was to encourage God’s people.<sup>29</sup> Stuart takes the position that the name here is Yahweh first-person form, *’ahyeh* and translates into the Canaanite causative which means “I cause to be.” It is also here in Verse Thirteen that Stuart identifies the shift that Moses is no longer being polite to God (v. 11) but is protesting his assignment.<sup>30</sup> The name should then be understood as referring to Yahweh being the creator and sustainer

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<sup>27</sup> Fredrick Carlson Holmgren, “Exodus 2:11-3:15,” *Interpretation* 56, no. 1 (January 2002): 73-76, accessed November 1, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>28</sup> J. K. Hoffmeier, “Exodus,” in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 43.

<sup>29</sup> M. Poole, *Annotations upon the Holy Bible*, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1853), 121.

<sup>30</sup> Stuart, *Exodus*, 121.



and authorizes Moses to say, “I AM CAUSE TO BE” sent me. It is also here in Verse Thirteen that Stuart identifies the shift that Moses is no longer being polite to God (v. 11) but is protesting his assignment. Stuart and Hannah both believe from this point his consternation was because he doubted his ability to confront Pharaoh and lead the nation of Israel out of Egypt.

Verse Sixteen broadens the leadership circle as God gives Moses instructions on how to accomplish the task. The instructions relate to the elders, the king and the Israelites. God told Moses to go to the elders and counselors (leaders) in Israel and tell them that God had appeared to him in the bush and share with them God’s message of concern. God has Moses use the phrase ‘the God of the Hebrew’s when he spoke to Pharaoh; it is a term polytheistic people would understand.<sup>31</sup> Every development by God is intentional. God is bringing a circle of leadership around Moses that will also witness his wonders and miracles before the king. This group of elders will also play another role. Moses has not been a part of the Israel community for forty years. He is not familiar with their experience or customs over this time. He will need these leaders of the community to stand with him and to show their support. They bring their own human influence and voice to the people. God assures Moses that they will listen to his voice and the elders will accompany Moses to the king.

God repeats his vision from Verse Eight and declares that the people will listen to Moses and believe but the king will not. The king will not let Israel go until he is compelled by the mighty hand of God and when God does show his might and strike Egypt with all the wonders that he will do, the king will let them go and take with them

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<sup>31</sup> A. W. Pink, *Gleanings in Exodus* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1962), 22.

silver, gold jewelry and clothing for their sons and daughters. They will prepare God's people for their journey into their promised land.

### *The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart*

Unlike the Israelite elders, the king would not listen to Moses and let God's people go. Verse Nineteen is the first reference to the hardening motif; which is more fully developed in Exodus 4:1-17 through the arrival of the plagues. The hardening motif has been the subject of many commentaries, articles and monographs as scholars have sought to obtain answers to questions about human culpability and divine sovereignty. The common view, whose context is evaluated through Exodus 4-15, is a theological one. Did Pharaoh harden his heart or did God harden Pharaoh's heart, or both? Most theologians have found it difficult to accept a deterministic view of the relationship between God and man, and for this reason there have been numerous attempts to interpret the hardening passages in a way to soften them.<sup>32</sup>

McAfee believes to approach the answer, further clarification is needed in three areas: lexical, grammatical and contextual. In the lexical analysis, the most frequent root used to describe the heart of Pharaoh in the Exodus narrative is the stative root glossed in the Qal "to be or grow firm, strong, strengthen." In addition to the sense of strength this root can also indicate the more figurative sense "to be courageous." The second most common word used to describe the heart of Pharaoh is the stative root that means "to be heavy, weighty, burdensome, honored." Finally, the least common root employed in the description of Pharaoh's heart in the Exodus story is the stative root commonly glossed as

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<sup>32</sup> Robert R. Wilson, "The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41 (1979): 18-36, accessed November 1, 2017, *Old Testament Abstracts*, EBSCOhost.

“hard, severe, fierce.”<sup>33</sup> Throughout biblical Hebrew, the latter stative root is commonly used to describe a stubborn and unyielding disposition usually as it relates to God. This root occurs twice in the Exodus narrative.

Another reason that theologians had difficulties with the hardening motif is that they are unable to agree on a comprehensive interpretation of the motif in Exodus 4-15. Literary critics have found definite patterns in the use of the motif in the plague stories; source critics have been successful in isolating the terminology within each literary strand and form critics have shown consistent patterns in the use of the motif by various Pentateuchal authors. Where there are still conflicting views is on the function of the motif in the final version of the plague and crossing narratives. Wilson articulates his argument through the JEPD four source theory.<sup>34</sup>

Adding to the continuing conversation around the narrative is that the motif occurs twenty times between Exodus 4:21 and Exodus 14:17, however outside of Exodus 4-15 there is only one reference to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart (1 Samuel 6:6).<sup>35</sup> In this, two arguments have developed; it is simply a literary device used by the author to give the plague and crossing narratives a coherent structure or the hardening motif was created by the authors or editors to link previously existing narratives of individual plagues or sequences of plagues. One of the more recent challenges to the latter theory is Brevard S. Childs whose challenge to the form-critical interpretation argues that the

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<sup>33</sup> Matthew McAfee, "The Heart of Pharaoh in Exodus 4-15," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 20, no. 3 (2010): 331-353, accessed November 1, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>34</sup> Wilson, *The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart*, 41.

<sup>35</sup> Wilson, *The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart*, 57.

hardening motif arose after the multi-plague tradition had developed.<sup>36</sup> According to Childs, both the Yahwist (J) and Priestly (P) saw the plagues as divine but ineffective as demonstrated by the need for multiple plagues. The hardening motif was designed to explain why the divine signs failed. The hardness of Pharaoh's heart thwarted the purpose of the plagues.

The verb used by the Yahwist never has Yahweh as the agent of the hardening, using the root *kabed*; "to be heavy." In contrast, the Elohist (E) always use *hazaq* to express the hardening that has the basic meaning "to be firm or strong" with an extended meaning "to be courageous." If the firm heart or mind is steadfast in its purpose and this prevents a needed change to occur, the person's persistence can become stubbornness. Like E, P frequently uses the piel of *hazaq* to indicate that Yahweh is the agent of hardening (9:12; 11:10). However, when these various expressions are placed in their proper chronological sequence the word *kabed* virtually disappears in later sources and the later sources tend to see Yahweh as the agent of hardening.<sup>37</sup>

Continuing the review of the literary structure of the plague stories, each individual plague story finds Pharaoh's heart in exactly the same place that it was in the beginning, heavy. Each new plague appears because of Pharaoh's refusal to obey the new request. Here Yahwist uses the hardening motif to give literary cohesion to the whole plague narrative. By doing this, the hardening motif sets the stage for a new plague story. This reveals that in the J layer of Wilson's analysis the hardening

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<sup>36</sup> Wilson, *The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart*, 89.

<sup>37</sup> Dorian Coover Cox, "The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart in Its Literary and Cultural Contexts," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 163, no. 651 (2006): 292-311, accessed November 1, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

terminology describes Pharaoh's insensitivity to the divine command, but the cause of his insensitivity is never revealed.

Turning to the next literary layer of the text, we look at the hardening motif at the Elohist layer, which is more complex. There is only one E plague, integrated into the J's plagues yet clearly different. The plague of darkness begins with Yahweh's command for Moses to stretch out his hand and bring the plague of darkness (10:21-23). By adding the account at this point, E suggests that the plague is the direct result of Pharaoh's hardening, which is then reinforced in Exodus 10:27. Adding the hardening notice here (10:27), immediately before the description of Pharaoh's reply implies that the hardening seems to be a direct result of the plague. This makes Yahweh the agent of the hardening and suggests an explanation of Pharaoh's persistent refusal to let the people go.<sup>38</sup>

In the Priestly layer, we see the further development of tendencies present in E. Two complete P plague stories are preserved in the present text (8:12-15[8:16-19]; 9:8-12), and both are only slightly expanded versions of the plague pattern found in E. P seems to follow E (4:21-23) in seeing the hardening as a way that Yahweh assures the appearance of the tenth plague. As a result of the hardening the Egyptian first-born are killed and the Israelites are released from slavery (7:3-5). The interpretation of the hardening that P expresses in Exodus 6:2-7:7 is reinforced by his editorial work on the remainder of the plague narrative. Like P's plague stories, his story of the introductory sign (7:8-13) concludes with the note that Pharaoh's heart was hardened so that he did not listen to Moses and Aaron, "as Yahweh said" (7:13). Finally, P adds a statement in Exodus 11:9-10 that summarizes the first nine plagues which rounds off the literary unit

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<sup>38</sup> Wilson, *The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart*, 145.

and provides a reminder that the whole hardening process is to insure the coming of the tenth plague (12:1). His repeated phrases “as Yahweh said” (7:13, 22; 8:11, 15; 9:12, 35). In P’s view Yahweh is in total control of events and causes the hardening in order to assure both the release of Israel and the destruction of the Egyptians.

Through this study and framework, it is clear that the author has provided support for the traditional form-critical view and for the countering view of Childs. In J the hardening motif is not used to link previously independent plague narratives, but it is used to give literary structure to the overall narrative. The motif has literary functions but no discernible theological functions in J. In E, for the first time, the hardening is a direct response to the plague and thus the motif plays a logical role in the flow of the narrative. In this, E makes an important theological statement and also gives a reason for Pharaoh’s refusal to let the people go. Lastly, P uses the motif literarily to further unify the plague narrative and the motif has a theological function as it is used to portray the plagues and the crossing narrative as part of Yahweh’s way to bring about his divine plan for Israel.<sup>39</sup>

### *Signs, Wonders, and Excuses*

Chapter Four continues with the repetition of inquiry and answer in the full Sinaitic theophany format as the addressee questions and God responds. It is clear through this encounter with God that the first step in leadership, in covenant leadership is the relationship between God and his chosen leader. Even as Moses is told to gather the elders to support his leadership, all guidance and direction came first through the

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<sup>39</sup> Wilson, *The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart*, 165.

relationship between God and Moses. God leads, loves and grows us through authentic relationship with him and then our authentic relationships with others.

As the writer moves out of the literary structure and characteristics of the pericope and progresses into the development of the covenant leadership model, the question is posed again about the position of Moses' heart. As the conversation between God and Moses continues at the burning bush the writer focuses on Chapter Four of the pericope as Moses continues with his objections and questions. God will bring his mighty hand and compel the king of Egypt to let his people leave and God himself will give his people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Yet Moses did not answer with expectation or gratitude; instead he meets God's promises with yet his third objection. "What if they don't believe me"? Was this question in direct defiance of God when he said in chapter 3:18 when God told Moses that the people would harken to his voice. In his writings, Lang does not believe that Jehovah blames Moses for his doubts but rather gives him three marks of authentication.<sup>40</sup> Four hundred years without a prophetic voice would make it difficult for the people to believe that Moses had a genuine encounter with God. Jamieson, on the other hand, noted that it is Moses who continues to struggle in his conviction that God's presence and power would always accompany him.<sup>41</sup> The writer believes that both are true.

Moses had been a sheep shepherd for forty years. These were not people with their own experiences, idea and beliefs. Sheep were passive and even though their lives

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<sup>40</sup> J. P. Lange, P. Schaff, and C. M. Mead, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Exodus*, vol. 2 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 11-12.

<sup>41</sup> R. Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and D. Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 50.

were in the hands of their shepherd, Moses had become secure and comfortable in protecting their lives from those who came to devour them. He had the responsibility to find peaceful grazing land for them to feed. Going up against the king of Egypt to lead Israel into their promised land was a leadership level well above sheep. Moses needed to be certain that God would do this because the writer believes that Moses knew that he alone could not. He understood the hardship of the Hebrew people and certainly did not forget the encounter that caused him to flee to Midian. Often time, our past human experiences arise and can discourage our present situation. Was this the case for Moses now? These were the people who had rejected his act of protection when he killed the Egyptian task master (Ex 2:12). Was this still the sense of humility as Stuart proposed as the reasoning earlier in chapter three? Regardless of the foundation of the questions, God met his servant right where he was in his answer when the almighty demonstrated his love to Moses.

God answers the objection by showing his power to perform miracles. God uses the shepherd's instrument to show Moses his first sign. There is some discussion about whether the object used was the shepherd's rod or something more suitable to show strength to the Egyptians. The rod would have represented an occupation that the Egyptians loathed and there is a suggestion made that it was rather a baton or long stick commonly carried by Egyptians or people of Egyptians of good position and especially by persons in authority. This is supported by the fact that this miracle is only shown to Pharaoh, but Moses in Midian, forty years after he left Egypt, is not likely to have possessed such an article.<sup>42</sup> The writer believes that God wanted to use an easily, readily

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<sup>42</sup> H. D. M. Spencer-Jones, ed., *Exodus*, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1909), 85.



available, no preparation sign to begin his demonstrations with Moses and the rod proved to be that tool.

God turned the rod into a snake (*nachash*) that represents the generic word applicable to any species of snake. This was a common trick done by the Egyptian magicians as God would bait them into showing their magic providing an opportunity to show his superior power by swallowing up their snakes. Clearly, Moses believed the snake to be dangerous as he fled from it. God then performs the second part of the first sign as Moses had to visually show his trust in God by reaching out his hand and taking the snake by the tail. His trust was responded to by God as he turned the snake back into the rod in his hand; so that they believed and also as Moses believes.

God's next miracle would show the Israelites that the incurable is curable by the Lord God of their fathers. Fully developed leprosy was considered incurable, until God shows his complete control over the power of illness and healing. Spencer-Jones details the progression of leprosy this way:

It begins with inealy crusts and scurfy scabs, originally not larger than a pin's point, a little depressed in the skin (Lev. 13:3, 30), and covered with white hairs (*ib.* 3, 20). These spots rapidly spread (*ib.* 8), and produce wild [proud?] flesh (*ib.* 10, 14). The leprous symptoms appear most frequently on the hairy parts of the body, and also on members which have been ulcerously affected. When the leprosy has gained ground, *the whole skin appears glossy white* at the forehead, nose, etc., tuberculated, thickened, dry like leather, but smooth; sometimes it bursts, and ulcers become visible. The nails of the hands and feet fall; the eyelids bend backwards; the hair covers itself with a fetid rind, or goes off entirely (Lev. 13:42). All external senses are weakened: the eyes lose their brightness, become very sensitive, and are continually blurring; from the nostrils runs a fluid phlegm."<sup>43</sup>

It is this process that God causes to immediately appear and as quickly it immediately disappears and if these two signs do not cause them to harken to your voice God says

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<sup>43</sup> Spence-Jones, *Exodus*, 86.

Moses will take the water of the river and pour it onto the dry land and the water will become blood upon the dry land.

Moses does not respond in awe or ask the Lord God anything about this third miracle, but rather he responds with his fourth excuse. With all the time God is spending with Moses as he builds this very personal and intimate relationship with his chosen leader, Moses stays in a carnal place. Moses is not focused on God, it is on himself and the Israelites. His view shifts from “what if they don’t believe me” to his own personal shortcomings. Has he forgotten whose presence he finds himself? Realizing that Moses has spent the past forty years isolated in the desert with the sheep, his new calling to speak to men could feel like an unbearable challenge. He may have been concerned about being able to clearly articulate the words given by God. Knowing that he would be before the king of Egypt and the elders of Israel, he may have felt intimidated by the thought of those events. The writer believes that Moses had become very comfortable and secure in his humble role of herding his father-in-law’s sheep. It appears that in the midst of his humanness, he had lost sight of the divine experience he was having.

In this, the Lord’s patience appears tested as God reminds Moses of who the designer is of this mouth of which he complains. Beyond a slow tongue who makes men dumb or deaf or blind? The words that Moses would speak would not be his, but God’s. Does that not make a difference for Moses? Would God allow an impediment from the mouth that he had created obstruct his message to his people that would bring them out of bondage? I am the God of all design and I am telling you to go. God admonishes Moses telling him to go as he is being instructed and God commits to Moses yet again.

Moses finally just asks God to please send someone else with him. Even in his anger, God answers the request of Moses to provide someone who has a better control of the language. Aaron, the Levite, your brother who speaks well will go with you. Aaron approaches and it is here that the dialogue ends.

### *The Covenant and Promise*

One of the most foundational aspects of Old Testament theology is the promise and covenant that was given to Abraham and reiterated to his descendants. The theme of promise and covenant is not an incidental theme but is one interwoven throughout the Old Testament. The first statement of promise is to Abraham in Genesis 12:1. The terms of the promise are given in Genesis 12:2-3: “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

This promise relates to Abraham and is an eternal promise extending its blessings to all the people of faith throughout the ages.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the promise given to the patriarchs, a promise that will bless the multitudes, was to function through Abraham’s offspring as emphasized in Genesis 22:18, “and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed....” The word for offspring or “seed” is *zera*, which appears to clearly speak to the physical descendants of Abraham.<sup>45</sup> In the New Testament, the word

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<sup>44</sup> Thomas Edward McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 16.

<sup>45</sup> McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise*, 16.

*sperma* (seed, offspring) refers to the physical descendants of Abraham (Luke 1:55; John 8:33,37) but the apostle Paul included within the concept those who are Abraham's offspring by faith (Rom. 4:13-18; 9:6-8; Gal. 3:7, 23-29).<sup>46</sup> This extension also brings a corporate aspect to the promise as Paul identifies the body of believers with the offspring of Abraham. This body of believers exist because as Peter affirms (Acts 3:25-26), Christ is the offspring (*sperma*) through whom the promise is mediated.

Elements of the Davidic promise and covenant (2 Sam. 7) are similar to the Abrahamic promise. Like Abraham, David is promised that his name would be great (v. 9), the nation is promised security in its own land (v. 10); David is promised offspring (vv. 11-12), kings are to descend from him (vv. 12-16); and the Davidic promise is eternal (vv. 13-16).

As we look at the promise in the Mosaic Covenant, it is apparent that the promise is an essential part of the covenant. In Deuteronomy, Moses summoned the people to obedience to the stipulations of the covenant. He said "You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the Lord your God...that he may be your God as he promised you and as he swore to your fathers..." (Deut. 29:12-13). Similar to the Abrahamic and the Davidic covenants, the Mosaic covenant has a promise of offspring (Exodus 19:5-6). The promise that the Lord would be their God does not take prominence in the Abrahamic covenant, but it takes on great significance in the Mosaic covenant. The Mosaic covenant defines and amplifies the promise for a new generation. The statement of the promise to Abraham was quite suitable for the nomadic family-clan of the patriarchs, but Israel was given a covenant that would govern her as a nation for centuries

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<sup>46</sup> McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise*, 18.

to come.<sup>47</sup> In Deuteronomy 6:3 the Lord said, “Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you”; reiterating the promise God made to Moses in Exodus 3:8, 17.

In the world of ancient Israel, society was organized along kinship lines. The basic unit was the extended family called “the house of the father,” followed by the clan, and then the tribe. Clans and especially tribes established alliances with other units through covenants or treaties where they took oaths before their gods to follow certain guidelines or accept certain responsibilities relating to each other. The covenant was a cultural, legal and religious device for uniting distinct kinship groups.<sup>48</sup>

It is apparent that God spent some very personal, intimate and deliberate time with Moses preparing him to become the leader of a nation. The writer refers to it as personal and intimate because it was the Lord God in a one-on-one session, listening and responding to his creation and chosen leader. The writer will now look to extract the model that God developed for covenant leadership that became repeatable. The reader believes that this model is meant to be used as the model for leadership in the church and in the marketplace today. In the chosen pericope, the divine interacted directly with his servant. God spoke directly to his chosen leader. The passage shows how our past experiences, hurts and even our current circumstances impacts our encounter with God. The awareness of the bush that was burning and not being consumed was not enough to counter some of the human things that Moses had experienced. As some of the

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<sup>47</sup> McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise*, 27.

<sup>48</sup> Steven L. McKenzie, *Covenant: Understanding Biblical Themes* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2002), 11.

commentaries suggest that it was not his humanness, but his awareness of what the people had been through and what he needed to convince them. It is only through the relationship that God had and built with Moses and then Moses' willingness to move forward in God's will.

Scholars have defined covenant—translated from the Hebrew *berith* in various ways, and the context in which the word is used in scripture will also inform our understanding of its meaning. The Hebrew word derives from a root which means “to cut” and hence a covenant is a “cutting” with reference to the custom of cutting and dividing animals into two parts with the contracting parties passing between them in making a covenant (Jeremiah 34:18-19). Some suggest that a true covenant relationship in essence says “May I be torn apart like these animals if I fail to uphold my part of this covenant.”<sup>49</sup> This is illustrated in Genesis the fifteenth chapter as God alone passes between the slaughtered animals while Abraham sleeps, again emphasizing the unilateral nature of this covenant as well as the ultimate level of commitment involved. At its most basic level, a covenant is an oath-bound relationship between two or more parties. Individuals, who enter into covenant relationships, are said to share in each other's life. Thus, human covenants (for example, marriage) fall under this general definition.

Further in Genesis 31:50 we find the covenant between Jacob and Laban concerning the treatment of his daughters aware that no man will be there to see them, but God is the witness between them. God is central in a covenant even when it is not between God and man but between man and man. Paul so eloquently demonstrates in his letter to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:1-6. Paul, after greeting Timothy with the grace, mercy

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<sup>49</sup> McKenzie, *Covenant*, 16.

and peace of God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord goes on to thank God as he remembers Timothy. He is reminded of Timothy's sincere faith. Not a faith that began with Timothy but one that dwelt first in his grandmother Lois and then in his mother Eunice and now that dwells in Timothy. Just as God reminded Moses of his promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Paul remembers the spiritual heritage of Timothy as he longs to see him again. Could there be doubt about the sincerity of the relationship between Paul and Timothy? Could there be any doubt of them being a part of each other's lives as they demonstrate the relationship centered on Christ Jesus and flowing with his love and grace. Paul was certainly in covenant relationship with Timothy and Paul was a covenant leader. His guidance and leadership came through this sincere caring relationship that he had nurtured and both had committed to. They were first committed to Jesus and through the love, peace and grace of God the Father and Christ Jesus they were able to be committed to each other. Covenant leadership begins first with our relationship with Christ and then our sincere relationship with those sheep he has sent us to shepherd. Just as God commissioned Moses, we must first be commissioned by God to lead the sheep that he will send.

Covenant is the way in which the Bible describes and defines relationship: first our relationship with God and then our relationship with everyone else. The first recipients of God's Covenant call were the fathers of the nations and the nation's connection to them reminded the people that they were one with God. In Jesus, the revelation is completed. It is not a human father that we need; it is a heavenly Father.<sup>50</sup> Identity flows from covenant relationship. Our identity is a genuine heart connection

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<sup>50</sup> Mike Breen, *Covenant and Kingdom: The DNA of the Bible* (Pawleys Island, SC: 3DM, 2010), 126.

with God and from that relationship flows the foundation for our relationships with others. It is through these genuine relationships that we are most effective as leaders in the Kingdom.

### Conclusion

God knew that the covenant he would make with Israel would need to be different than the one he made with Abraham and David. The society had changed from that of a nomadic culture to one of community. The promise that the Lord would be the God of Israel takes on great significance in the Mosaic covenant. The Mosaic covenant defines and amplifies the promise for generations to come, but it is through the apostle Paul and the Abrahamic covenant that the promise of God is attributed to Abraham's offspring by faith (Rom. 4:13-18; 9:6-8; Gal. 3:7, 23-29).<sup>51</sup> This extension brings a corporate aspect to the promise as the body of believers are the offspring of Abraham. This body of believers exist because as Peter affirms (Acts 3:25-26), Christ is the offspring (*sperma*) through whom the promise is mediated.

One could question whether it is the relationship with Christ that is lacking in the Embassy leaders, a breakdown at the foundation. Interaction with the leaders and conversations with Bishop Smith tend towards this not being the issue. Leaders at Embassy show a level of maturity in the depth and the richness of their relationship with Christ. Many have moved from a base understanding of church to a fuller understanding of Kingdom. Many espouse to have genuine meaningful relationships with other members of Embassy, their families and outside friends. What is not apparent are these

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<sup>51</sup> McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise*, 18.



genuine relationships within the ministry teams. It is not seen within the highest level of elders and leaders at Embassy or below. Why is their relationship with Christ not able to flow through as the primary connection between shepherds and sheep? If the connection with Christ is not where the disconnection occurs, then what is it that is obstructing the flow? Moses was communicating directly with God and yet questioned his ability to be the leader and spokesman God was calling him to be. He looked at his human frailties and they were bigger than God's sovereignty. It had been forty years since Moses tried to emancipate Israel from her captives but still that memory had to be prominent for Moses as he stood before the unconsumed bush. What are the memories, the human mistakes and failures that may be keeping Embassy's leaders from moving forth fully in their calling as effective spiritual leaders and what is their level of awareness around these issues? What is their stuttering or lack of skill that may anchor their shallow and unproductive relationships? God had to bring these things and much more to my consciousness before he bought me a way to overcome them. It is the writers' belief that this is the same course needed for the Embassy leaders.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS**

This historical foundation chapter will focus on the lack of covenant leadership in the evolution of the Pentecostal Oneness revival and provide a contrast with the British Baptist development of covenant community through the intentional inclusion of confessions and covenants in the development of their culture. The historical view is relevant because it provides the framework that other organizations have used and helps the reader to gain insight on methodologies that have worked effectively as well as ineffectively. The Pentecostal Oneness and the British Baptist community provides extensive examples of the covenant community and more specifically they each shed light on the development within their culture.

Embassy Covenant Church was the outgrowth of church leaders disheartened with the religious emptiness of many years under Pentecostal leadership. These leaders, each having spent more than twenty-five years in the denomination, came out and planted Embassy as a non-denominational church. An excerpt from an extensive interview with Bishop Frank Jones, the founder, will be used to give voice to what became part of the legacy of the Pentecostal church and The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW).

Two definitions are appropriate to the discussion of culture and covenant as used in this chapter. Anthropologists define culture in several ways:

With inclusion of the elements and relative consistent agreement that culture is: “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and any capabilities and habits acquired by a ...[person] as a member of society. Culture is therefore: something that is shared by all or almost all members of some social group; something that the older members of the group try to pass on to the younger members and something that shapes behavior, or...structures one’s perception of the world.”<sup>1</sup>

Organizational behavior psychologists define organizational culture as the pattern of assumptions, values, and norms that are shared by organization members.<sup>2</sup> Local churches are organizations with values and norms that impact the behaviors of the members; determining whether relationships are valued and if covenant can be established.

Covenant is so central to our faith and life that the Bible is called the Old and New Covenant (Testament being the Latin form of the word).<sup>3</sup> Covenant refers to the act of God in freely establishing a mutually binding relationship with humankind. The highest level of covenant is acknowledged and revered as being between God and his people.<sup>4</sup> It is because of God’s covenant and only through that covenant love that we have the ability to sustain human to human covenant relationships. Covenant relationships build communities of trust where all are included. One of the founding members of Embassy, Mary Jane Cash defined covenant this way:

An oath bound relationship between two parties who bind themselves together for a purpose; there is great intimacy and trust in these relationships. Covenant is

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<sup>1</sup> Nancy J. Adler, *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior* (Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College Publishing, 1997), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas G. Cummings and Christopher G. Worley, *Organization Development and Change* (Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College Publishing, 2001), 498.

<sup>3</sup> David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 138.

<sup>4</sup> S. J. Grenz, D. Guretzki, and C. F. Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 32.

more than just relationship as in the Bible it was a blood contract... but the spirit of our agreement is that we will do no harm to each other and that we share access to each other's lives.<sup>5</sup>

Our Christian experience is about shared experiences as we are meant to grow inside relationships and those relationships within communities; where this is lacking our growth is stunted and our spiritual desires more. This excerpt is from an interview conducted with Bishop Frank Jones, Bishop and Senior Pastor of Embassy Covenant Church. It highlights experiences in the Pentecostal Oneness denomination that culminated in his search for something more. The initial question asked Bishop Jones to share his first involvement with the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW).

Bishop Jones became a member of a PAW church at eighteen and was ordained as an elder at age twenty-one. Being an ordained elder provided the privilege to participate in all ministerial functions within the organization. At age twenty-three Elder Jones went to study under Bishop Harry Herman to benefit from their strong training ministry. Bishop Herman was one of a few white Bishops in the PAW and at that time was the District Elder of the Northern District Council of the PAW, which included Michigan. The agreement was that Elder Jones and his family would serve for one year under Bishop Herman. The interview continues by the Interviewer asking the question: "Tell me about the year that you spent there, again through the lens of leadership and relationship and even in the understanding of how the theology of the PAW itself may have impacted the relationship and leadership for specifically that year that you were there."

The church that I was in was not a strong teaching church so that's why the pastor recognized that I needed a stronger teacher... [Our previous pastor] was a profound teacher but whatever that ministry had been lost so they only told us

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<sup>5</sup> Mary Jane Cash, interview by author, Troy, MI, February 26, 2017.

stories about what was but couldn't teach it. I come in and I'm hungry for understanding so they send me to the church in Kalamazoo.<sup>6</sup>

Interviewer: Where they believed you could get this teaching and understanding?

Yes. That's why they sent me there. And the dogma associated. There was also Bishop Paddock who was a member of Bishop Herman's church. He was who I really wanted to learn from. He was past presiding Bishop of the PAW and he used to pastor this church. He was traveling all over the world now... I'm very ambitious at the time and sincere. I asked a whole lot of questions. And even had the nerve to challenge certain things, in question form. The culture back then did not permit a lot of that. Some of it was perceived as you are too ambitious. You need to calm down a bit. So when I arrived there, the first thing Bishop Herman says to me, I'll never forget it "I'm not going to be your friend. I'm not going to be your buddy." Those were his words. "You are here to learn." I hear his voice now. "We are not here about friendship, none of that, you are here to learn." My natural personality is "cool." That's the way I was. I'm not here trying to be friends. I'm here to learn. You guys arranged this and I'm subject to it. He and I were the only ministers who sat on the platform. Back then the ministers sat on the platform that was part of PAW culture. In order to be a minister in his church, his standard was so high, it was very high if you had the opportunity to sit on the platform that was a monumental achievement. So I'm twenty-three and sitting on the platform there. So, in his mind I should be very very pleased with that. And I'm not saying that I wasn't. And here is an example that will give you the dynamics of the relationship. We would come to church on a Sunday, walk up to the platform, I would greet him he would greet me, we would sit down, the service would end, we would greet and leave. That would be the extent of it. No conversation. Nothing. He's the boss. I'm the protégé and that's the way he set the relationship. The elders in that day or the senior leaders in that day believed and there is a verse in the Bible they used to quote that in order to make it in ministry you had to be tough. So, it was this touch love they were giving. And if you could stand the whippings and the disciplines and whatever they put on you then you were authentic and if you can't stand it, you probably wasn't called anyway. That was the culture. That was the philosophy.... [We had] a morning service, and afternoon service and an evening service and it was mandatory that I be at all the services because I was a minister. I had to model before the congregation everything he taught. I was told that was my role, you don't have to preach you don't have to do nothing. Your job is to model whatever I'm teaching. I teach on faithfulness then you have to show it. That's what he was training me.<sup>7</sup>

Interviewer: Was the only real relationship the one you had in the pulpit?

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<sup>6</sup> Frank Jones, interview by author, Troy, MI, August 10, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Jones, interview by author, Troy, MI, August 10, 2017.

Yes, that's it. Watching what I do. One time he came up to me and said everything was a test of my loyalty, my commitment, my faithfulness. If I passed those tests, I'm good. Later on, he came up to me and said "you know how you find out what's in a person's heart?" he says "all you have to do is give them money, they will reveal their heart; position and that will reveal their heart and he had one third one and I can't remember what that was right now. And all those tests he had been giving me. He told me that after the fact. And he eventually, he allowed me to minister. And I'll never forget this. Back then I wore robes. He didn't. The PAW culture was that most ministers wore robes. He only wore a suit. I didn't know the theology behind him wearing a suit. I just notice he never wore a robe. We never had a conversation about it. It's my turn to preach. He's gone out of town and he trusted me. This is huge. I get up to minister and I had on a robe. I wear a robe because I sweat. Afterwards, he heard that I had on a robe. He called me into his office and went up one side of me and down the other because he said I was showing a difference between he and I and I'm dividing the congregation when I have on a robe.<sup>8</sup>

Interviewer: When your only purpose was to demonstrate what he was saying? Right?

That's what your role was?

Yea. I did not do that.

Interviewer: Because he didn't wear a robe and you did?

Yes, but that was never discussed. I didn't catch that going into it. I wore a robe because I always wore a robe because I'm a sweater when I minister so I'm trying to preserve suits and wearing a robe was my personal culture, which I should have relinquished in his church in that area, but it wasn't a rebellion on my part but a lack of consciousness. I got it. No more robes...Because some would call it a shame based church in this day, but in that day, this was normal. He was a little beyond the norm. He believed in order. He was known as the man who believes in order. Let me give you an example of order. He was a great teacher of the tabernacle. His way of implementing that was not so much that Jesus fulfilled it in us, but he taught Jesus likes precision in everything, which he does. So, he would walk through the fellowship hall and the tables were covered and they had to hang seven inches off the table and he would measure. So, whoever was over the kitchen or the fellowship hall if it was six they were in trouble and he would enforce it. What this did for me personally, because I was the kind of person who was very regimented at the time too and very much God's way, this is the way it had to be, or we were out of order on earth. That was my forte. That's why they sent me there they thought it would be a good match, but watching him, I saw myself in the future and the more I saw the more I began to reject in my heart because I saw the destruction, I saw the pain, I saw the weakness, I saw the ineffectiveness of it. I said this (I wasn't saying it out loud to him but inside) I

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<sup>8</sup> Frank Jones, interview by author, Troy, MI, August 10, 2017.

was almost; everything I learned I said I don't want to be like that. That's what I was saying.<sup>9</sup>

Bishop Jones fulfilled his one-year commitment, was elevated by pastor and planted a PAW church in his hometown of Battle Creek, Michigan; now at the age of twenty-five. During his time as pastor Bishop Jones met a PAW Bishop Norman Wagner. Bishop Wagner was more of a relational person and he and Bishop Jones formed a bond. Bishop Jones had several other experiences with the PAW that caused him to seek God for direction for his future and whether he was to stay or leave the PAW, God confirmed to him that he was to leave the organization; even as Bishop Wagner admonished him to stay and help change the organization from the inside. Bishop Jones struggled with some of the PAW doctrine and leadership models but the PAW was all that he knew; it was his dysfunctional home. This excerpt resumes at the place that God began to shape Bishop Jones' future:

Interviewer: It sounds like Bishop Wagner was like the stepping stone for you up to Bishop Bismark. How did you meet Bishop Bismark?

Now I meet Bishop Bismark through Bishop Wagner and Bishop Wagner was fond of Bishop Bismark and Bishop Bismark seemed to have another step and, so we decided to connect with him went forward and his whole organization was based on covenant. His church was called a covenant church. After meeting him he came to Battle Creek, stayed at my house. He's preaching all over the world, this big-time preacher, slept in [my daughter's] bed. [My oldest daughter] played basketball in junior high school. He went to the game with me and we are sitting up in the stands watching my daughter play and I'm like, who is this? What is this all about? And that's the way he was. He's relational. And that's what won me over to the [Jabula] organization.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Frank Jones, interview by author, Troy, MI, August 10, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Frank Jones, interview by author, Troy, MI, August 10, 2017.

There was something that Bishop Jones was leaving, but now there was something he was being pulled towards. He wanted sound doctrine and true relationships in the ministries where he served. Bishop Jones left the PAW, joined the Jabula Global Network of churches and renamed his church in Battle Creek Emmanuel Covenant Church. This chapter will look at the fragmented relationships that were the fiber of the Pentecostal revival and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.

### **Pentecostal Revival**

Though contentions from some contemporary scholars express the modern Pentecostal movement resulted from a direct work of the Holy Spirit, the contributions of William Seymour and the early-twentieth-century Los Angeles revival cannot be understated. Peter Hocken asserts,

If the developments associated with Charles Parham had not been followed by the outbreak at Azusa Street, the former would have probably only been another variation on the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a personal experience...hav[ing] no greater claim to validity than many interpretations of individual experiences in Holiness circles.<sup>11</sup>

William Joseph Seymour was an African-American pastor who received spiritual direction from Charles Price Jones, an influential African-American, Wesleyan-Holiness leader and later attended Bible school in Houston Texas and studied under Charles Fox Parham. Parham is credited with the formulation of the classic Pentecostal theology including the definition of tongues as the initial evidence of the Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup> Tongues as

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<sup>11</sup> Peter J. Hocken, *The Glory and the Shame: Reflections on the Twentieth-Century Outpouring of the Holy Spirit* (Guildford, UK: Eagle Press, 1994), 53.

<sup>12</sup> J. R. Goff Jr., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 956.



evidence provided Pentecostals with an identity significantly different from that of the Holiness Movement by making Holy Spirit baptism a demonstrable experience.

Seymour built on his foundation by integrating his Wesleyan-Holiness theological system with Parham's teaching on the baptism in the Spirit including the evidence of speaking in other tongues. Seymour moved to Los Angeles and began teaching Bible study on Bonnie Brae Street; where several members began to speak in other tongues. As the news of the outbreak of tongues at the Bonnie Brae Street Meetings traveled through the Los Angeles Holiness community both the committed and curious flocked to see. The group grew, and in search of a larger facility they found a former African Methodist Episcopal Church building at 312 Azusa Street. This building became the Azusa Street Mission where revival meetings ran almost continuously; holding traditional revival preaching about sin and salvation, and exhortations on heart purity and spiritual power. More compelling than the rhetoric or the hearty singing and agonized prayers that filled the hours were the gifts of the Holy Spirit in action.<sup>13</sup> The personal meaning of the evidence revolved around themes of power, purity and spiritual gifts. The baptism with the Holy Spirit transformed the meaning of life by heightening sensitivity to the spiritual world. Like Charles Wesley before them, early Pentecostals thought their religious experience brought a touch of heaven into their ordinary lives.<sup>14</sup> In the true definition of revival, the racial identity of the leader, the communal context and physical setting of Azusa provided an experience with God in ways that they had not experienced him

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<sup>13</sup> Edith L. Blumhofer, "Revisiting Azusa Street: A Centennial Retrospect," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 30, no. 2 (2006): 59-64, accessed November 7, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>14</sup> Blumhofer, "Revisiting Azusa Street," accessed November 7, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

before.<sup>15</sup> It was to this humble place that strangers would flock from the four corners of the continent to be taught by a semi-literate, partially blind black man and in 1906 seemed to be nothing short of miraculous proof of the latter-day Pentecost.<sup>16</sup>

Another unique feature of the revival was its egalitarian nature. Most worshipers were from the lower and working classes, but there was no stratification by class, race, gender or age in the involvement or leadership in the services.<sup>17</sup> All freely worshiped God through speaking in tongues and interpretation, prophecy, testimony, song, prayer, miraculous signs and preaching. As people felt led by the Holy Spirit, Seymour and others in leadership gave them freedom to do as the Spirit led. This demonstration led Frank Bartleman to report that “the color line was washed away in the blood”<sup>18</sup> Walter Hollenweger wrote about it this way:

It was something very extraordinary...white pastors from the South were eagerly prepared to go to Los Angeles to Negroes, to fellowship with them and to receive through their prayers and intercessions the blessings of the Spirit. And it was still more wonderful that these white pastors went back to the South and reported that they had been together with Negroes, that they had prayed in one Spirit and received the same blessing.<sup>19</sup>

This freedom of expression was certainly not the experience Bishop Jones experienced as a young pastor in Battle Creek, MI. There was hierarchy and stratification in the local

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<sup>15</sup> Martyn-Lloyd Jones, “What is Revival?” Articles, accessed December 29, 2017, <http://articles.ochristian.com/article1651.shtml>.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Edwin Jones, “The ‘Color Line’ Washed Away in the Blood?: In the Holiness Church, at Azusa Street, and Afterward,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 34, no. 2 (1999): 252-265, accessed November 7, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>17</sup> Estrela Y. Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 121.

<sup>18</sup> Jones, “The ‘Color Line’ Washed Away in the Blood?” 252-265, accessed November 7, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander, *Black Fire*, 122.

church and it was strongly upheld. There were clear consequences when a young leader stepped outside of their appointed position as was the case when Bishop Jones wore a robe to preach when it was not his Bishop's custom to do so. It was the culture of the PAW to wear a robe when preaching, but not the Bishop and pastor at the church where he served.

Criticism of the revival came from multiple directions. The secular press ridiculed the gatherings and called it "a bizarre new religious sect...breathing strange utterances and mouthing a creed which it would seem no sane mortal could understand."<sup>20</sup> With some Holiness leaders embracing the movement; having engaged in the Azusa Pentecostal experience; others were not convinced that this was a genuine move of God; some even calling it demonic. Possibly the most hurtful to Seymour was the criticism that came from within.

As the revival grew, Seymour remained in close association with his Bible school teacher Charles Parham. Seymour and Parham communicated, and Parham encouraged Seymour and committed to come Los Angeles. When Parham visited Azusa Street in October 1906, he had two goals in mind. First, he fully expected Seymour to turn control of the meetings over to him and secondly to fulfill his desire to incorporate Seymour's group into a network of Apostolic Faith missions.<sup>21</sup> As Parham entered the mission, however, he was appalled by what he saw as improper race mixing and the "animalisins" of the unsightly, overzealousness and unseemly behavior he found at the revival.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Alexander, *Black Fire*, 132.

<sup>21</sup> Gary B. McGee, *Tongues, The Bible Evidence: The Revival Legacy of Charles F. Parham*, Enrichment Journal, accessed December 28, 2017, [http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/199903/068\\_tongues.cfm](http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/199903/068_tongues.cfm).

<sup>22</sup> Alexander, *Black Fire*, 139.

There are speculations as to the motivations behind Parham's aversion to the scene he found at Azusa Street. First, Parham was generally averse to the more emotive elements of revivalism. His teaching at his Bible schools and his writings clearly expressed his opposition to what he saw as extremes that manifest themselves in "foolish demonstrations and manifestations... such as shouting, leaping, jumping, etc."<sup>23</sup> Some saw the leaders of the revival as restorationists as they abandoned the conventional means by which society ordered reality (education, social status, race and gender) and in doing so ran contrary to Parham's sense of order and respectability.<sup>24</sup> This restorative theological foundation will serve as the separating wedge in the Oneness doctrine. Secondly, he may have been taken aback by the success Seymour was having at propagating the doctrine he had formulated, when after several attempts he was not able to spark an ongoing revival. It would be remiss to overlook the writings concerning the racial attitudes of Charles Parham and using this as the lens to understand his behavior. This is certainly contrary to the belief that the Holy Spirit has been poured out on all flesh; black and white.<sup>25</sup>

Having been rebuffed in his attempt to directly take over the leadership of Azusa Street, Parham planted a competing congregation within five blocks of the Azusa Street Mission. Parham and his followers advertised that they would conduct "dignified

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<sup>23</sup> Charles F. Parham, "The Everlasting Gospel," accessed December 28, 2017, <https://www.scribd.com/document/192937227/The-Everlasting-Gospel-by-Charles-F-Parham>.

<sup>24</sup> Joe Creech, "Visions of Glory: The Place of the Azusa Street Revival in Pentecostal History," *Church History* 65, no. 3 (1996): 405-424, accessed November 7, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen Hunt, "Early Interracial Oneness Pentecostalism: G. T. Haywood and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (1901-1931)," *Modern Believing* 58, no. 3 (2017): 294-296, accessed December 29, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

religious services...along with proper and profound Christian lines.”<sup>26</sup> This attempt was also unsuccessful.

Regardless of the motive that underlined Parham’s disdain for what he saw at Azusa street, the impact on Seymour would be the same. Certainly, he would not have stayed connected to Parham had he not respected him and through that connection acknowledging his contribution to the Pentecostal doctrine and thereby the Azusa revival. Seymour must have felt betrayed by his teacher when he clearly objected to what was believed to be the work of the Holy Spirit in an Acts like revival.

This history is the cultural and doctrinal foundation that Bishop Jones experienced in his local congregation. The culture permeated the local churches and as they organized it became institutionalized through the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.

### **Pentecostal Assemblies of the World**

Following the heyday of the Pentecostal revival, there were several efforts to organize Apostolic Pentecostal churches into a network of fellowship churches with the primary purpose to support the spread of the Oneness doctrine. A primary architect and preeminent leader in this work was Garfield Thomas Haywood. Haywood was a Black Oneness pastor in Indianapolis whose desire was to revive the interracial dream of Azusa Street through the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. Haywood’s leadership as defender of the Oneness movement was respected even within the Assemblies of God,

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<sup>26</sup> Cecil M. Robeck Jr., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 1056.

where Blacks were not welcome.<sup>27</sup> Haywood had always been a part of the lesser known, largely regional group, PAW; an Azusa based, largely white interracial organization. Haywood's church, a member of the PAW was the most interracial congregation in the movement; at one time about sixty percent was black and forty percent white. This was a staggering accomplishment given the rising presence of the KKK in Indiana.<sup>28</sup>

The PAW convened its first meeting in Los Angeles in 1907 and merged with the General Assemblies of the Apostolic Assemblies in 1917, becoming formally incorporated in 1919 when it moved its headquarters to Indianapolis. Prior to the move nearly three-fourths of the PAW's membership was white. The move of the headquarters changed the complexion of the organization significantly to one where blacks represented the majority of membership. Even with this shift, whites still held a number of important positions and the board reflected the racial diversity of the body. The growing proportion of blacks made some whites uncomfortable and the delicate racial harmony of the PAW began to show signs of a growing chasm. By the early 1920s, the chasm showed clearly the weakening of what had proven to be the longest running interracial experiment within American Pentecostalism.<sup>29</sup> At the 1922 Southern Bible Conference, some southern whites felt that having a racially mixed organization hampered the movement's growth among other southern whites who were less open to racial mixing. Until this time, the organization's assemblies had been held in the north so that both races could participate freely, and blacks could have access to adequate lodging.<sup>30</sup> Here is where the culture

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<sup>27</sup> Gary B. McGee, *People of the Spirit: The Assemblies of God* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2004), 204-206.

<sup>28</sup> Alexander, *Black Fire*, 215.

<sup>29</sup> Alexander, *Black Fire*, 217.

shift begins; the message of oneness in heaven was not able to sustain its manifestation on earth. History shows that there was not always complete agreement on all of the doctrinal penning, but it was the breaking of the relationship along the racial divide that would bring the tenuous unencumbered fellowship that existed between the two races to a screeching halt. In 1923, the assembly adopted “Resolution No. 4,” stating that:

Because of conditions now existing in many parts of the country through no fault of the brethren but rather those opposed to the work of the Lord it is deemed advisable that two white presbyters sign the credentials for the white brethren [especially in the South] and two colored presbyters sign the papers for the colored brethren.<sup>31</sup>

In 1924, there was a move for two separate administrative structures in the PAW. They would continue to exist under a unified covering, but the blacks and whites would each maintain their own places of worship, boards, ministers and printed materials. When the proposal was rejected by the blacks, the organization split predominantly along racial lines. After multiple attempts at unity within white Pentecostal ranks, the United Pentecostal Church International eventually became the largest oneness denomination in the United States.

Whites who cherished the interracial fellowship of the PAW stayed with the organization, and its leadership continued to reflect a commitment to racial unity. There were other attempts to merge with predominantly white Pentecostal alliances, with no success. Though the number of whites continued to decrease, the commitment of the PAW to interracial fellowship and leadership did not; as they deliberately structured biracial partnerships at the head of the denomination. One such partnership was between

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<sup>30</sup> James L. Tyson, *The Early Pentecostal Revival: History of the Twentieth Century Pentecostals and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame, 1992), 245-246.

<sup>31</sup> Alexander, *Black Fire*, 218.

Samuel Grimes, presiding bishop succeeding Haywood after his death, and Ross Paddock, a white pastor from Michigan. When Paddock assumed the head of the organization in 1967, he was assisted by a black pastor from Flint Michigan, Frank Bowdan. Even so, the numbers continued to diminish and today the PAW is a predominantly black organization with predominantly black leadership.<sup>32</sup>

Deeply woven in the fabric of the individual church and institutionalized in the fellowship organizations is the desire to unify and the failure to do so. Doctrinal concerns notwithstanding, it was the breakdown in relationships that resounded through the decades; searching for more than religion. The British Baptist understood this and included structures in their foundation community and kingdom. Miles Monroe said, “God’s Kingdom to be the answer; a new way of living and now realizing this truth kingdom is like an antagonist spirit against religion.”<sup>33</sup>

### **The British Baptists**

Robert Walton’s book *the Gathered Community* represents the fruits of collaboration by several British Baptist between 1941 and 1944 which places their emphasis on “the New Testament Church.” The New Testament Church emphasis is on God, the Incarnate Christ, the Holy Spirit, who makes the risen Christ contemporary; and the Christian Community that is created and sustained by the Spirit. These Christians saw

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<sup>32</sup> Alexander, *Black Fire*, 225.

<sup>33</sup> Miles Monroe, “Kingdom vs. Religion,” YouTube, accessed December 29, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j84Jg-kUmag>.



themselves in the light of God's redemptive purpose and were concerned with fellowship, life, power, unity and witness.<sup>34</sup>

As early as the seventeenth century, British Baptist believed that the church was a "gathered community" of believers who acknowledged their faith in Christ and covenanted with God and with each other to separate from the world and walk in his ways. The fellowship of each local congregation was based on the idea of a covenant relationship which included their belief that they were not in this congregation accidentally, but that this body had been called together by Christ as a local body of believers; that they came together voluntarily (exercised free will) as a response to their calling; and their life together within the community was based on mutual agreement.<sup>35</sup> Since life together was always in the context of the biblical idea of the church as a covenant community of faith within congregational life, the relationship to Christ and to one another was often described in written covenant agreements. These were not creedal statements but in contrast covenants included statements which set forth the duties of those who joined in a spiritual relation. These covenant agreements spoke to the contractual, spiritual and relational nature of covenant in the New Testament Church.

Churches would sometimes draw up a covenant and adopt a confession as a basis for their life together. Both were important, in 1697, Benjamin Keach, a London pastor, published a covenant alongside the 1689 Second London Confession and both the covenant and the confession were recommended to the Calvinistic Baptist churches and

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<sup>34</sup> Norman H. Maring, "The Fellowship of Believers," *Foundations* 1, no. 2 (1958): 85-91, accessed December 29, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>35</sup> Karen E. Smith, "A Fellowship of Believers: Covenant Relationships among British Baptists," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 36, no. 4 (2009): 391-405, accessed December 19, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

adopted by many of them.<sup>36</sup> It was important that each member of the local church understood the covenant relationship as it was the basis of how they came together in their church meetings. Unity in Christ was at the heart of their covenant relationship with each other.

Unity does not imply that the church was without dissent or diversity of view and thoughts. There is a well-known and documented historical event called *The Neath Chapel Case*. It chronicles a dispute between Pastor Burns and a powerful and influential deacon, Deacon Curtis.<sup>37</sup> The conflict arose when Deacon Curtis, who had political connections, constantly and continuously interrupted church meetings with the purpose of shaping the meeting and messages to suit his own ends. Deacon Curtis took great offense to an illustrated sermon Pastor Burns taught entitled *The Fall of Man*. A physical fight ensued and eventually Pastor Burns, feeling his authority had been disrespected, compiled the documentation and left a copy of *The Neath Chapel Case* for all future ministers of the church to read. The resolution of their differences was less than ideal or Christian. It provides a perspective of what can happen when we don't focus on Christ and allow his love to govern our relationships. What this also communicated within the culture is that differences of opinion between pastor and people or within congregations are a feature of Baptist life; Christian community. It opens the door for dispute and dissension; but in spite of and possibly because of this possibility, there is an intentional cultural focus on the dependency on Christ and each other in the building of covenant

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<sup>36</sup> Smith, "A Fellowship of Believers," 391-405, accessed December 19, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>37</sup> Smith, "A Fellowship of Believers," 391-405, accessed December 19, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

communities.<sup>38</sup> This is the core of the Christian life. Living our out differences without fragmenting our relationships.

### *Early Baptist Associations*

For the larger community of faith, as well as the local church, the idea of being drawn together and held together by Christ was at the heart of the understanding of Baptist fellowship. They insisted that central to their understanding of the fellowship within the wider community was the belief that they were all one in Christ and shared in one communion in Christ. This view provided them a foundation that we now call a Kingdom view. The Orthodox Creed published by General Baptists in 1679, for example, stated that they felt that "the visible church of Christ on earth is made up of several distinct congregations, which make up the one Church. Likewise, in the preamble to their 1644 Confession of Faith, Calvinistic Baptists in London stated that local congregations were not to be identified alone as the church. They wrote, "and though wee be distinct in respect of our particular bodies, for conveniency sake, being as many as can well meete together in one place, yet are all one in Communion, holding Jesus Christ to be our head and Lord; under whose government we desire alone to walke, in following the Lambe wheresoever he goeth."<sup>39</sup>

In addition to this statement in the preamble, London Baptists included an article within the 1644 Confession which provides further evidence of their understanding of the

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<sup>38</sup> Smith, "A Fellowship of Believers," 391-405, accessed December 19, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>39</sup> Stanley A. Nelson, "Reflecting on Baptist Origins: The London Confession of Faith of 1644," *Baptist History and Heritage* 29, no. 2 (1994): 33-46, accessed December 29, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

relationship between the local community of faith and the wider body of believers. In article XLVII, the wider church relationship is described in this way, “though the particular Congregations be distinct and sever all Bodies, everyone a compact and knit Citie in it selfe; yet are they all to walk by one and the same Rule, and by all meanes convenient to have the counsel and help one of another in all need fill affaires of the Church, as members of one body in the common faith under Christ their onely head.”<sup>40</sup>

Just as the local church understood their connection first to Christ then to each other, the association understood that the churches were not individual and distinct, but a community of believers with Christ as their single head. This flow of understanding documented in the early seventeenth century was a firm foundation to the spiritual and cultural beliefs that were to guide the leaders and laypeople in the congregations.

### **Conclusion**

In a quest for Christian unity, many denominations have felt impelled to reconsider their respective traditions. The modern ecumenical movement has not sought to gloss over real differences and has encouraged probing into the scriptures for further light on the nature and mission of the church while unearthing differences that have resulted from cultural pressures; the likes of those experienced in the PAW. No organization functions in a vacuum; especially churches as cultural pressures from the environment work to infiltrate them. Churches strive to bring the spiritual culture and doctrine of the scriptures to life in the community of believers. The audacity of the Holy

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<sup>40</sup> Nelson, “Reflecting on Baptist Origins,” 33-46, accessed December 29, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

Spirit to fall on all; regardless of race or social strata was not lost at Azusa; but a paucity of sincere relationship between the leaders allowed a racial divide.

In review of Seymour and Parham and their role as pastors and leaders, the division was black and white. Whether conscious or without, Seymour and Parham allowed their own volition to influence the development of culture through the Pentecostal resurgence. Seymour, a heretic of his time and being a member of the marginalized group; relished the opportunity to bring their standing up to that of the majority by harnessing the Oneness doctrine in heaven and on earth. Seymour brought this element, a belief in equality, into the culture and worked to have it take strong root in the local church and at the PAW. The external and internal resistance to equality (oneness) was too great and the outcome; Azusa Street Mission relegated to a small black Pentecostal church and the chasm and eventual split of the PAW by racial lines.

Parham, being a member of the majority class had no desire to upend the status quo. His disgust at the influence of black worship on the Pentecostal movement and the flagrant demonstration of countercultural norms brought him to expose his racist and misogynist position and to communicate his desire to return to “dignified religious services...along with proper and profound Christian lines.”<sup>41</sup> His influence through teaching at his Bible school in Houston and within the Pentecostal community supported the dominant culture of Jim Crow in the south. Unlike Seymour and Haywood, Parham had an ally in the external environment from the dominant culture. Parham’s internal discourse provided leverage and support that the heresy of Azusa and the culture it would build was dangerous to efficacy of the movement. This message was perpetuated and

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<sup>41</sup> Robeck Jr., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 1056.

used as one of the arguments for the division of the multiracial PAW and the eventual development of the white United Pentecostal Church International, the largest oneness denomination in the United States.<sup>42</sup>

Approaching culture from a different perspective, the British Baptist had an intentional construct that included covenant community as a core element. Beginning with the early coupling of creeds and covenant and the adoption of both by many Calvinist Baptist churches, this element was crafted to take root in the local and networked churches. Even when leader's behaviors did not demonstrate community, the bigger environment made it more difficult to perpetuate the undesirable behaviors. The covenant was not about the religion, but about their lives together. The culture, through the creeds and covenant agreements dictated that the church was not an independent local body but that they were deliberate connected communities of believers with Christ as the head. The desire for connected community was what eventually drove Bishop Frank Jones and the Mary Jane Cash family out of the PAW and through God's purpose, together as founders of Embassy Covenant Church. A culture of Kingdom and covenant community is what Bishop Jones and the other founding families desired to intentionally design and perpetuate at Embassy; but PAW was very much a part of their history. As leaders they did put in place structures to support covenant community. Processes to support these structures were lacking as the pendulum swung from volumes of documented procedures in the PAW to few documented processes at Embassy. What also appears lacking is the true development of the community, especially in relationships between leaders and ministry teams.

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<sup>42</sup> Creech, "Visions of Glory," 410.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS**

Theologians look at the specific biblical covenants and the variations in the lens through which we understand them; this chapter will not explore Covenant theology. There is no debate in either Covenant theology or New Covenant theology that God is a covenant God and our relationship with him provides the connection for the covenant community of believers.

This chapter will probe Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology of community and formation through the lens of the relational nature of Christianity. The chapter will explore the lived theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer through his life and circumstances and the implementation of his theology through a covenant-based church. The chapter outlines the requirement of community for true Christian development and genuine covenant; focused first on our connection and relationship with the completed work on the cross and the risen Christ, then with others within the body of Christ.

Woefully missing in the development of the Pentecostal doctrine was the understanding and intentional development of the body of Christ as communities of believers. The experience of the Holy Spirit and the evidence through tongues is an individual experience but happened among a community of believers, the local church. The events at Azusa street did not successfully build a spiritual community of believers that continued to focus on Christ as their sustainer and then to see themselves collectively

responsible for each other. This continues to be the challenge for the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World even today.

Antithetical to our current culture, the Christian experience is meant to be shaped and lived in a Christian faith community. The Bible says that it is very good and pleasant when brothers live together in unity which emphasizes the strength of the Christian community against any adversary who would attempt to destroy it. Through shared worship, scripture reading and daily life work, these communities experience God together. This can certainly be challenging and may feel as an assault on our uber independence elevated by our current culture and society. Our young adults are encouraged to have their own things, move out to their own apartment and have their own minds. Communal life requires the sacrifice of some of the individual choices in favor of the discipline and unity of the body.

Covenant relationships, the foundation of Christian communities have their grounding in God's relational covenants with his people. Covenant theology is a system of theology that views God's eternal plan of salvation through the outworking of three covenants—the Covenant of Works, Covenant of Grace, and Covenant of Redemption. Some covenant theologians see only two covenants; the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace.<sup>1</sup> O. Palmer Roberson does not believe there is enough evidence to conclude that there was a pre-creation Covenant of Redemption between the Father and the Son. He is not asserting that the persons of the Trinity did not have a plan for

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<sup>1</sup> Larry Dean Pettegrew, "The New Covenant and New Covenant Theology," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 18, no. 2 (2007): 183, accessed January 6, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.



salvation before time; but that there is no evidence of a specific Covenant of Redemption.<sup>2</sup>

New Covenant Theology (NCT) is a branch of Reformed theology that claims that the entire Mosaic Covenant has passed away as a law code, and that Christians are supposed to live under the New Covenant. In contrast, many Covenant theologians assert that the New Covenant is only an updated Old Covenant and that parts of the Mosaic Covenant continue on into the New Covenant and serve as a standard of ethics for New Testament Christians.<sup>3</sup> New Covenant Theologians reject this theory in two ways. First in believing that the Mosaic Law cannot be divided and secondly since it cannot, it is rejected as a whole.<sup>4</sup>

NCT rejects the typical Covenant Theological (and others) view that divides the Mosaic Law into three distinct parts, some of which have been abrogated, and some of which the New Covenant Christian is obligated to obey. Wells and Zaspel write, "The popular hermeneutical attempt to divide Moses' law into so many parts and then interpret NT statements of the passing of law accordingly is simplistic, and it cannot be maintained exegetically. It is the Mosaic code as a whole and in all its parts that has passed away, and the apostolic declarations to that end must therefore be seen to embrace even the Decalogue.

The focus of Embassy Covenant Church is neither on the Covenant or New Covenant Theology, but on the building of covenant for the purpose of community. Church as a Christ centered community was the mission and work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

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<sup>2</sup> Michael J. Vlach, "New Covenant Theology Compared with Covenantalism," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 18, no. 2 (2007): 202-203, accessed November 24, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>3</sup> Pettegrew, "The New Covenant and New Covenant Theology," 183, accessed January 6, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>4</sup> Pettegrew, "The New Covenant and New Covenant Theology," 183, accessed January 6, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

### **Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Theology**

Eric Andrae in his review of the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works introduces the theologian this way:

One can get lost in the Bonhoeffer maze. The depth, complexity, nuance, and paradox of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's thought;1) his "eclectic mixture" of Continental Protestant academic theology, "confessional Lutheranism, biblical Pietism, moderate Catholicism,"2) and the middle-class intellectualism {bildungsbürgertum) of his day; his truncated lifespan (1906-1945) with disparate stages of his faith-life's journey,3) including imprisonment; the fragmentary and incomplete nature of many of his writings; his appropriation by an incredibly varied array of theologians and theologies: all these factors have led to a Bonhoeffer who seemingly belongs, at one and the same time, to just about everyone yet no one in particular.<sup>5</sup>

The diversity of form, audience, context, and content leads Bonhoeffer's work to be a theological conversation within itself, a conversation that is open at the edges and available for different points of entry by any number of different interpreters.<sup>6</sup> The point of entry for this chapter will be Bonhoeffer's lived theology of community and his unique understanding of con-formation in Christ and what it means for Christ to take form among the community. Bonhoeffer's theology of formation in Christ considers a biblical and theological approach and specifically considers the communal form of Christ, which takes shape in the church. His precision in his doctrine has a pathway to explicit and implicit interaction with doctrines of theological anthropology, Christology, pneumatology, holiness, ecclesiology, and sanctification, making it an "upstream"

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<sup>5</sup> Eric R. Andrae, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works: A Review Essay," *Concordia Journal* 37, no. 4 (2011): 323, accessed January 3, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph McGarry, "Con-formed to Christ: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Christian Formation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 5, no. 2 (2012): 226-227, accessed December 16, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

doctrine. Bonhoeffer's understanding of the sufficiency of God's work in Christ is his consequent framing of what Christian formation can and cannot be.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born February 4, 1906 in Breslau, Germany and died a martyr on April 8, 1945. From his earliest days at Humboldt University in Berlin, Bonhoeffer had the desire to shape and live in a true Christian faith community. In 1935 he served as resident theologian for a small group of ordination candidates who lived together, allowing him to explore the possibilities of such a community. Finkenwalde was one of five Confessing Church seminaries that emerged after the pro-Nazi Reich ordered the closing of preachers' seminaries in the Old Prussian Union church. Members of the seminary community were there to learn two things; first how to lead a communal life in obedience to the will of Christ Jesus and second to learn to recognize the strength and liberation in brotherly service and communal life in a Christian community.<sup>7</sup> The uniqueness of this community cannot be over-stated; leader and students living together as family serves as the efficacy of Bonhoeffer's theology. These are the requirements of a spiritual community. The community, though brief in its existence, profoundly impacted on all who experienced it. Communities of faith must take concrete form in the world to demonstrate and radiate the presence of God credibly and effectively as they service those in need.

### **Life Together**

*Life Together* focuses on the nature of Bonhoeffer's Christ-centered community: the life of Christians living together, united in service to and for one another though

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<sup>7</sup> Nichols, *Bonhoeffer on the Christian Life*, 85

prayer, confession and partaking of the Lord's Supper.<sup>8</sup> Through his book he provides an exposition of the Christian community of seminarians at Finkenwalde who were instructed on ministry, prayer life, spiritual love and the brotherhood that they were expected to extend one another. The reader found the book compelling in its portrayal of the inner strength and intensity of Bonhoeffer's relationship with Jesus Christ as it developed in practical everyday life. Although reluctant to publicize the Finkenwalde "experiment" Bonhoeffer hoped that the work would usher in a new way of thinking about the church, a way of thinking centered in Christ and resulting in service to others. As he surveyed the church in his day, he saw both service and Christ lacking, resulting in an emaciated church.<sup>9</sup> It is here that we find a core of his Christology, Christ makes community possible. This visible community of Christians is a gift of grace from the kingdom of God, a gift that we require in our very existence as Christians. "Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. No Christian community is more or less than this... We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ."<sup>10</sup> We are brother or sister to another only through Jesus Christ, and what he has done for and to each of us. Community is only through Christ Jesus; not an idea, but a divine reality that is spiritual and not an emotional experience. It is this that differs us from all other communities.

What is community through Jesus Christ? Among human beings there is strife but through Jesus there is peace. It is our recognition that we appreciate the physical

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<sup>8</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works Life Together* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), viii.

<sup>9</sup> Nichols, *Bonhoeffer on the Christian Life*, 68.

<sup>10</sup> Nichols, *Bonhoeffer on the Christian Life*, 57.

presence of other Christians, but only as it is to fulfill the purposes of God. Believers no longer live by their own resources but seek and expect everything from God through Jesus. Because we no longer seek salvation or justification in ourselves, it is only God's Word in Jesus Christ that fulfills us. And at the core of this community is thankfulness. The ability to thank God for every small measure of knowledge, experience and love that has been given; especially the Christian fellowship. Community through Jesus Christ means living together under the Word of God. It is a community that gathers for praise and worship, thanks and prayer; not out of routine or obligation, but out of the longing to be with Christ and others. We speak to one another with psalms, teach and admonish one another and sing.<sup>11</sup> This is how Bonhoeffer put community into practice. In his life and through his theology, he seems to add community to the way that God's grace come to his people.

The struggle to have community through Jesus Christ is real in our local congregations and at Embassy. Contributing to the struggle for Embassy is the lack of regular, structured Bible Study as a discipline. Community living together begins with gathering and reading and studying the Scriptures. The Holy Scriptures tell us that the first thought and the first word of the day belongs to God, so gathering early morning was an integral part of building the Finkenwalde community. We are called to wait for God and to open ourselves to God in silence to hear his language as part of our being.

Bonhoeffer writes:

Contact with God must be practiced; otherwise we can never find the right tone, the right word, the right language when God surprises us. We must learn the language of God, laboriously learn the language; we must work so that we, too, can speak with God. None of us is so rushed that we cannot find ten minutes a day

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<sup>11</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 27

during the morning or evening to be silent, to focus on eternity alone, allow eternity to speak, to query it concerning ourselves, and in the process look deeply into ourselves and far beyond ourselves.<sup>12</sup>

This silence is as much a part of a community collective as it is individual personal time with God. It is not known to the researcher if this discipline is practiced by individual congregation leaders as it may well be, but it is not a community practice and is not a part of growing the spiritual community at Embassy. Covenant relationships in Christian communities are built in shared experiences through Christ.

Another service that one owes to others in the fellowship community is listening to them. Leaders are trained that they should have all the answers and that they give instruction and direction to their teams. The ordained minister is trained to talk, to voice opinions and to witness to the faith. Learning to listen and the value in listening is counter intuitive in western society. Many would say that they listen, but to what end? Is the listening with full attention and curiosity? If not, it is not honest listening, but rather listening with one ear waiting to respond, normally with our opinion or advice. Honest, sincere and curious listening is a ministry whose only purpose is to share in the life of the other. This encourages being not doing.

### *Spiritual and Emotional Communities*

It is possible that a congregation can have opportunities to fellowship but still be a congregation of lonely people. This is simply an established group of individuals with a common purpose, not a spiritual community. The scriptures call pneumatic or “spiritual”

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<sup>12</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “Sermon on Psalm 62:2” in *Barcelona, Berlin, New York, 1928-1931* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2008), 504.

as created only by the Holy Spirit, who puts Jesus Christ into our hearts as Lord and Savior. Christian communities and the individuals that make them up are thankful to God for the little things they receive, opening themselves up to receive great things as well. Christian communities are intended to be spiritual communities of light, truth and spiritual love. Spiritual love is bound to the word of Christ and whose purpose is to serve Christ; it lives in the clear light of service ordered by the truth. It is in these communities that Christ exists as community through the development of a community will; not the formation of an individual, but a social notion that requires the social nature of community.<sup>13</sup> Service is a cornerstone in a spiritual community. Members do not serve for the acknowledgement of their service or to gain stature within the community. Their desire is to serve Christ and the way to do that is to serve the community of believers. Through encounter within the spiritual community, a communal emerges that reflects the community's collective desire. An epiphenomenon emerges through this movement, which Bonhoeffer calls a community's objective spirit; giving this collective spirit the ability to be treated as a collective person allowing communities to be considered and treated as collective persons.<sup>14</sup> The collective person is in Adam when representing the will-to-self as community. This community is composed of many isolated individuals but yet is one...it is Adam. God's community, the body of Christ, is the collective person emerging through a new community, one composed of renewed individuals whose desire is the very will of God.<sup>15</sup> Formation is referenced to the community where the primary

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<sup>13</sup> McGarry, "Con-formed to Christ," 233, accessed December 16, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>14</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 248.

<sup>15</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 43.

concern is always Christ and how his body takes shape on the earth. Service is done through relationships. Our only ability to be in these relationship in spiritual communities is through our relationships with Christ. Bonhoeffer lived this out.

It was the style and discipline of Bonhoeffer's life that spoke even louder than his writings. The routine at the Finkenwalde seminary community was ridged and disciplined yet the esteemed theologian was referred to as "Brother Bonhoeffer by the students."<sup>16</sup> He would often break off the day's discussions or lectures and hike with the students in the woods or engage in some physical activity as well as enjoy music in the community. There were numerous occasions where Bonhoeffer took on chores including clean-up duty in the kitchen and making up a student's bed in the dormitory.<sup>17</sup> He once wrote in a letter to a relative who had only a short time to live "What would I do if I learned that in four to six months my life would reach the end? I believe I would still try to teach theology as I once did and to preach often."<sup>18</sup> Living his beliefs in this Christian community was the life that Bonhoeffer loved, even onto death. The only way to "be" in spiritual communities is through genuiue authentic relationships focused on Christ Jesus. The appearance of selfish, individual centered individuals within the community signals the presence of an emotional community.

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<sup>16</sup> Ronald F. Christian, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Community and Discipleship, As Emphasized and Applied in the Life and Mission of a Covenant Church* (1979). Doctor of Ministry Theses accessed October 31, 2018, [http://digitalcommons.luthersem.edu/dmin\\_theses](http://digitalcommons.luthersem.edu/dmin_theses), 26

<sup>17</sup> Ronald F. Christian, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Community and Discipleship, As Emphasized and Applied in the Life and Mission of a Covenant Church*, 35

<sup>18</sup> Ronald F. Christian, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Community and Discipleship, As Emphasized and Applied in the Life and Mission of a Covenant Church*, 45



The scripture calls psychisch or “emotional” that what comes from the natural urges, strengths and abilities of the human soul. The essence of emotional community is the darkness that spreads over all human activity, even over noble and devout impulses.<sup>19</sup> Emotional communities are communities of pious souls and pious-impious urges burn in emotional communities. These communities are self-focused with individuals who are equipped with exceptional powers, experience, and magical suggestive abilities that rule along with the Word of God. In these communities, everything that is originally and solely characteristic of the community mediated through Christ reappears in the nonmedicated emotional community of souls in a distorted form.<sup>20</sup>

In the distorted form conversations may have the appearance of being genuine, but they are not. They are not genuine with the purpose of engaging and having sincere concern for the needs of the other. They are used as power plays and ways of influencing and enlarging a personal sphere of power and influence. They are, as defined in process theology, moral evils intended to inflict our will and desires on another<sup>21</sup>. They are not conversations intended to build communities for Christ, those that desire to have a collective community spirit. These communities are not together through Jesus Christ but exist through the human desires of man.

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<sup>19</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works Life Together* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 13.

<sup>20</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, 14.

<sup>21</sup> Margorie Hewitt Suchocki, “What is Process Theology? A Conversation with Marjorie,” *Process and Faith*, accessed January 1, 2018, <https://processandfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/what-is-process-theology.pdf>.

### Individual and Community Development

Also pivotal to Bonhoeffer's theology is his emphasis on God's full and complete renewal of the human being in Christ and his application of this as reality for all humanity.<sup>22</sup> The human being is not recreated or renewed at the individual's conversion, rather the human being was renewed through the completed work at the Cross. This argues that justification is not the renewal of the Christian's being, but instead through the Holy Spirit is the appropriation of what God has already accomplished. This renewed being has not manifested because we perpetuate our will to self instead of our will for God and neighbor.<sup>23</sup> In his work, *Act and Being* Bonhoeffer draws on the works of Martin Heidegger, shifting the conversation in anthropology away from the substance and metaphysics of being into the interpretation and hermeneutics of existence. How does this renewed person exist in Christ reveal him? McGarry writes:

One cannot talk about what being is, only about how being exists. Of most significance, human being, what Heidegger calls *Dasein*, is not a "thing" as if it can be considered in abstraction from the way it exists, let alone a "thing" which can be divided up with a soul that can be shaped or formed. One can only discuss how *Dasein* exists in the world. And yet, *Dasein* can exist in any number of ways.<sup>24</sup>

Both Heidegger and Bonhoeffer believe that a human being does not have a body or have a soul; instead a human being exists as a unified whole composed of body, soul, spirit, and mind, constituted in and through encountering Christ. The way we live speaks to what we understand being to be. Is our existence in reference to self, or a way of being

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<sup>22</sup> McGarry, "Con-formed to Christ," 229-238, accessed December 16, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>23</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, 216.

<sup>24</sup> McGarry, "Con-formed to Christ," 230-231, accessed December 16, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

where the individual lives completely in reference to both God and others? Covenant leaders must exist in the way of Christ, living a life for Christ in the service to others. This requires both an awareness and then an openness to be fully present in the relationship.

Specifically, Bonhoeffer's theology means con-formation in Christ cannot speak of shaping the soul as if it could occur as a distinct activity. There is no place to grow, because, theologically, our being is everything in Christ through his resurrection. Being is not a thing that grows but through daily life lived becomes a progressive fidelity to the renewed, holy, sanctified state already achieved. Christians grow in a way of being and not in being itself. This very significant theological transition shifts the conceptual field for talk of formation.

Formation is not towards Christlikeness, but is the church taking on Christ's incarnate, crucified and resurrected form.<sup>25</sup> Formation occurs only by being drawn into the form of Jesus Christ, by being conformed to the unique form of the One who became human, was crucified and is risen.<sup>26</sup> This is not a form that is a repetition or duplication of Christ's form, but the revealed form that was created through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Formation happens only from and towards the form of Jesus Christ.<sup>27</sup> Formation is the elimination of those things that prevent the revealing of the true being. As meaning is applied to life experiences they draw us closer to revealing Christ or move us further away. Life in the fullness of humanity is lived believing that true freedom is being free

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<sup>25</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 43.

<sup>26</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 40.

<sup>27</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 43.

for God and others. As believers live in the complete freedom they possess in Christ, they live as responsible vicarious representatives for each other; and through this Christ conforms the community to himself and it adopts his shape.<sup>28</sup> Mortification of the flesh and moral transformation are central components to formation but are not the entire process. Through confession of personal and corporate guilt, through the bearing of each other's burdens and through the Christian struggle against the flesh, Christ takes form in the Christian community. As the individuals move from their Adam state... separate individuals yet together, towards their Christ state, collectively desiring only the will of God and taking on the responsibilities of each other; they are being conformed by revealing the resurrected Christ.

### **Implementing Bonhoeffer's Theology**

In the years following the closing of the Finkenwalde seminary Bonhoeffer wrote two of his most widely read books. As life's external circumstances became worse Bonhoeffer's lived and written theology became louder. In his collection *Letters and Papers from Prison* Bonhoeffer documents the final two years of his life. The impact of his extraordinary life continued to live as it touched and influenced a group of young struggling Christians in Fairfax Virginia in 1969. Bonhoeffer's two books, *Life Together* and *The Cost of Discipleship* became the emphasis for building community and discipleship at Home Mission Lutheran Church. In 1979 Pastor Ronald Christian prepared his doctoral thesis documenting the story of his congregation and the results

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<sup>28</sup> McGarry, "Con-formed to Christ," 237, accessed December 16, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

achieved through the integration and implementation of Bonhoeffer's theology of community and discipleship.<sup>29</sup>

Beginning with the tiling of floors, painting walls and constructing altar furniture the small congregation began their communal life. It was in the experience of working together and worshipping together that a strong community was formed and became the basis of covenant fellowship for the future life of the congregation. The church was intentional and designed a written covenant for life together in this covenant community. One of the characteristics of the covenant membership was the commitment to the congregation for only one year. Members committed to keep the four covenant disciplines; to worship and commune together, participate financially, become involved in the needs of the community and to maintain a relationship with God through prayer. The community became such a part of the lives of the youth that they would come to an early morning breakfast before school. After the meal, in enthusiastic unison the youth would say "This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."<sup>30</sup> Spending early morning time with the Lord became a part of their life way beyond their high school years.

The clear covenant disciplines provide the frame for the commitment to the community, and in doing so provides the basis for conversations when the commitments are not being met by members of the community. They include everyone and make

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<sup>29</sup> Ronald F. Christian, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Community and Discipleship, As Emphasized and Applied in the Life and Mission of a Covenant Church*, 9

<sup>30</sup> Ronald F. Christian, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Community and Discipleship, As Emphasized and Applied in the Life and Mission of a Covenant Church*, 85

everyone responsible for condition of the community, not just the leaders and establishes both an internal and external focus for the community.

The theological component of this covenant was not taken lightly. A requirement of those who drafted the original covenant and every member thereafter has been to read Bonhoeffer's book *Life Together*. This book, written out of his seminary experience provided the path for the communal design of this new church community. From the outset, the pastor was intentional and deliberate about how the community would live and grow together, through Jesus Christ. The congregation quickly took on the characteristic of persons honestly caring for one another, not in an emotional way, but in a way only given through the Holy Spirit.

As part of the context analysis, Embassy's Operations Manual contained some similar documents to those used at Home Mission Lutheran church. There was a covenant commitment document that was originally signed by leaders only and leaders were asked to serve for one year. Many of the other documents in the binder were more procedural than connective and were relegated to just filling a binder in recent years. Some leaders and members interviewed spoke of past activities that the congregation did together; painting a senior's home and team ministry were now part of the church's past. Embassy has one annual community focused event where we serve others. There have not been, at

least in the five years that we have been members, communal projects that would support our laboring together for the good of others.

### **Conclusion**

Christian life is a life lived with others through Christ Jesus. It is where one confesses to God and to others the trials of life's journey through loving and genuine relationships. It is where our love and desire for the will of God through Jesus becomes so strong that it begins to be an entity itself. Understanding Bonhoeffer's theology and designing a new congregation in that framework resulted in a spiritual community that grew and served one another and others. The leader of Home Mission Lutheran Church embraced Bonhoeffer and deliberately set out to replicate, in much larger scale the extraordinary experience written about the Finkenwalde seminary experience. How then is course correction and modification done in an existing community; one that may be more a group of individuals with something in common than a spiritual community focused and living through Christ Jesus?

The existence of any Christian communal life essentially depends on whether or not it succeeds at the right time in promoting the ability to distinguish between human ideal and God's reality, between spiritual and emotional community. The life and death of a Christian community is decided by its ability to reach sober clarity on this as soon as possible. In other words, a life together under the Word will stay healthy and understands itself as being part of the one, holy, universal, Christian church. One challenge of local churches, like Embassy, is to accurately diagnose the condition of their community, assessing the mix of emotional and spiritual development. The undiscerning observer

may think that this mixture of ideal and real, emotional and spiritual, would be most obvious; this is not always the case. It is not always possible to see the distortion behind what appears to be genuine conversations. Covenant leadership is relational leadership, which exists within spiritual covenant communities. Emotional Christian communities do exist with undercurrents of power and authority. It is possible for leaders to believe that they serve the community in a healthy, spiritual way, being deceived themselves.

We are unable to grow independent of the communities in which we belong. There is no separation. It is through our interdependence and commitment to each other that we engage in the process to reveal our true selves, our full Christ image. This interdependence must exist in covenant communities that first recognized that our ability to be in covenant comes only through our covenant and relationship with Christ. This is why any leadership development must also support development of the community. It must also require strengthening the relationships within the community. Through the human struggles in these relationships, as we individually and collectively struggle with our humanity and how it shows up through relationships, we can begin to move from our Adam state, individuals but together, towards our Christ state: wanting only his will for ourselves and others.

One must stop here and question the condition of the church today, and specifically the community at Embassy. Is it functioning in the emaciated state surveyed by Bonhoeffer in 1944? The context analysis revealed a lack of service within the Embassy community. A portion of the hypothesis for this project is that the lack of effective leadership results in community members not serving in ministry teams. It is possible that this is a contributing factor but also possible that in the bigger community



has not developed into a spiritual Christian community. Embassy, whether conscious or not, is in an Adam state. How does this community grow in its focus on Christ through service emerging as a collective with sincere concern, honor and love for each other through Christ? How does a theology that emphasizes God's complete work in Christ influence how we discuss the lived reality of spiritual growth? How do we elevate the understanding and reality that formation is only through the collective community?

One impact of Bonhoeffer's theology on the project will be the approach of the conversation of change and growth. The desired outcome is to raise to the surface those things that prevent us from revealing our true selves and how this is done in genuine relationships that impact ours and others lives. How do leaders build these impactful relationships first as members of the community, then as leaders of ministries and teams within the community? His theology makes clear that part of thinking of leaders and others in the community should be the desire to discover new ways of co-creating our experiences. We live our true Christian experience and grow when we are freely open to God and to others.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

The theoretical chapter will explore topic reflecting on effective ministry leadership from a theoretical perspective. The purpose of this study is to educate church leadership on what covenant leadership is using a leadership development model that identifies internal competencies and external skills of covenant leaders. There is a need for church leadership to be educated to ensure that there is not a disconnect with the congregation at large.

Within this chapter, the discussion will explore topics such as psychology, social psychology and theological education. Each of these topics are relevant in that the term psychology and social psychology must be defined as it relates to this study. It is also relevant to discuss because social psychology discusses the deconstruction of the modern individual as “self.” It further assists the reader in gaining an understanding of the dysfunction between individuals and the church. More importantly, it assists the reader in gaining understanding on ways to bridge the gap between individuals and the church. Finally, the discussion becomes relevant as it relates to theological education. The reader will explore the notion of the importance and impact of theological education. Additionally, it will lead the reader to the discussion of practical theology, which provides insight and information on the practical methodology of ministry.

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behavior; it is a multifaceted discipline and includes many sub-fields of study such areas as human development, sports, health, clinical, social behavior and cognitive processes. Psychology, as a tradition, has long been interested in the relationship between leader and community.<sup>1</sup> Sociology is the study of our behavior as social beings, covering everything from the analysis of short contacts between anonymous individuals on the street to the study of global social processes; it is an overarching unification of all studies of humankind, including history, psychology and economics.

Social psychology examines the way groups and social structures shape individuals, their perceptions, beliefs, identities, attitudes, emotions and behaviors, and how individuals acting together create, maintain, and change social structures.<sup>2</sup> Much of the current image of leadership development draws from commodity-driven business paradigms rather than from interdependent, relational language that takes into account the interest of psychology of the person-in-community. Church leaders often rely heavily on business models and approaches that do not reflect the nuances, complexity or sensibilities of dynamic relationships. Much of leadership development, over the years has focused on goal accomplishment; recently shifting to behaviors that result in the accomplishment of the organization's goals. Many churches use business models of development and merely affirm Christian values; but this may be insufficient without

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<sup>1</sup> Saul McLeod, "What is Psychology," accessed February 9, 2018, <https://www.simplypsychology.org/whatispsychology.html>.

<sup>2</sup> "What is Sociology," American Sociological Association, accessed February 9, 2018, <http://www.asanet.org/about-asasa-story/what-sociology>.

some sense of the individual's social construct.<sup>3</sup> If the individual is socially constructed, what role would leaders play beyond subtle endorsements of predetermined community norms?

One of the great contributions of postmodern theorists has been the deconstruction of the modern individual as an isolated "self." New models of self-hood admit the deep relationship if not outright "creation" of the self in community. Theorists working with this new concept argue for a notion of "person-in-community," a concept that often helps ministers articulating the need for community to shape Christian character.<sup>4</sup> This acknowledges the relational dependency and confirms that the mere affirmation of Christian values in a community is not enough.

In recent years ministers have also become increasingly aware of the negative psychological potential of dysfunctional groups within faith communities. A body of literature continues to grow as researchers seek to identify damaging relationships between the religious group and the individual (described either as smaller groups within the parish or as the congregation as a whole). Often this literature is cast in a psychological model drawn primarily from system's theories based on families struggling with problems associated with addictive or abusive behavior.<sup>5</sup> Interventions presented as resources for ministry are often based on aspects of the family systems and or addiction model. While addictive disorder theory has provided the major impetus for most of the

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<sup>3</sup> Dean G. Blevins, "Healing Grace and Leadership: Analytic Psychology and Community," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 37, no. 2 (2002): 154, accessed February 9, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>4</sup> Blevins, "Healing Grace and Leadership," 168, accessed February 9, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>5</sup> Blevins, "Healing Grace and Leadership," 158, accessed February 9, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

current ministerial resources, adaptive leadership, a psychodynamic model, also sheds insight into group behavior and group leadership for Christian ministers in a postmodern world.

Finally, as we consider social psychology in the community of believers there is another important development in theological education; the emergence of an expansive understanding of practical theology, which reflects a broad consensus among theological educators that theology is inherently practical. That is, theology is a practice of the church rooted in particular contexts and influenced by interests and perspectives. In addition to all that theology can be, it always refers, however indirectly, to the general human situation as well as to the unique personhood of individuals. Thus, we have the linkage between leadership development and practical theology as an overall method for leadership effectiveness in practice.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter will explore social psychology as it impacts leadership development design and introduce the characteristics of The Universal Leadership Model.

### **Leadership Development**

One of the most outstanding features Jesus offered as a teacher is that He told stories through what we call parables. The recognition of these stories as parables is well supported in the theological literature, and they have withstood the scholarly critics' tests. Idioms derived from Jesus' parables have survived two millennia and are still used in our daily conversations. Our use of "casting pearls before swine" (Matthew 7:6), "building on

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<sup>6</sup> Robert K. Martin, "Dwelling in the Divine Life: The Transformational Dimension of Leadership and Practical Theology," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 3, no. 1-2 (2004): 99-138, accessed February 9, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

sand” (Matthew 7:26), and “going the extra mile” indicate the impact of Jesus’ figurative form of speaking on our modern languages. Jesus’ frequent use of parables has been tied to His Jewish roots: “Nothing about him is more Jewish or more rabbinical.”<sup>7</sup> The Hebrew word “*mashal*” is the word that in Greek translates as “parable.” The concept of “*mashal*” contains several forms of figurative speech such as proverbs, satire, puns, riddles, story-parables, simili.<sup>8</sup> Fonnebo goes on to describe the multi-layer depth of Jewish literature, especially the parables. There are three layers of communication; the surface layer, the middle layer and the earthquake layer.

The “surface” layer of Jesus’ parables keeps the listener motivated to keep listening because of the unfolding of the story line itself. The listener does not need to have any pre-knowledge to follow the course of the story. The middle layer speaks to the mental and emotional condition of the listener and makes new sense and creates meaning for the listener. Since stories are preserved in the human memory, they can initiate flashes of insight and continue to teach long after they are told. Thus, the task of the listener is to determine which story is most relevant for the situation at hand. A key point is that there is not one way to understand a story. Any story can harbor many possible beliefs, but we determine them by looking through the beliefs we already have. When a situation occurs that is an analogue to a story once heard, the two incidents mutually inform each other. The old story is then used as a means for interpreting the new story. When a story can be absorbed into our memory as a “natural fit” with stories we already know, we feel we

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<sup>7</sup> Fonnebo Liv, “The Parables: The Transforming Leadership Tools of the Master,” *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 5, no. 1 (2011): 18, accessed February 9, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>8</sup> Liv, “The Parables,” 23, accessed February 9, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

have understood the story. Our understanding of the new story becomes a function of the old story.

This middle layer is performed without our conscious knowledge; our brains running in the background. In the seminal work done by Peter Senge in *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization*, he refers to our mental models as those deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action. When we have conversations, these mental models serve as filters that we use to determine what information to take in and what meaning we put to the story or conversation.<sup>9</sup>

The third layer of communication, the innermost layer can be described as the earthquake layer. This is where a story causes dramatic changes to take place; a total replacement in the way a person thinks and evaluates a conversation or situation. The innermost layer has the potential to shake up the listener—his convictions, views, traditions, and values. It has the potential to shatter the human bedrock to a point where new convictions and values have to form, upon which a new perspective on life is constructed. By drawing invisible lines between real-life experiences and mental pictures we have the ability to stretch and deepen thinking and motivate a change that transforms behaviors.<sup>10</sup> The middle layer shields to the innermost layer; preventing earthquakes from happening. If we process out the information that could cause us to shift our way of thinking, how can this shift happen? The stories that we use to determine meaning come

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<sup>9</sup> Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of The Learning Organization* (New York, NY: Currency/Doubleday, 1990), 8.

<sup>10</sup> Liv, "The Parables," 23, accessed February 9, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

through our experiences and many times are developed in our young formative years; with young formative minds and logic.<sup>11</sup> As we grow and mature, how are our stories re-contextualized through our more mature minds and changed beliefs? This is an individual challenge of growth for humans and is often the center of misunderstandings in communication and community. Individuals process the same data through different filters and come to different conclusions, reasonable and valid to both. It is through their ability to help others understand their meaning-making process that they are able to help them understand how they reached their conclusion. The real difficulty is that often time the individual does not understand the automatic meaning-making process in the brain and therefore are unable to articulate it to others. The design of the leadership development delivery system is as important as the content that the system delivers. The system must allow the exploration of stories, of information through the middle layer and tools that help look at slow down and deconstruct the meaning-making system of the brain. It requires experiential and transformational leadership development.

### *Experiential and Transformational Leadership Development*

Experiential learning theory (ELT) provides a holistic model of the learning process and a multilinear model of adult development, both of which are consistent with what we know about how people learn, grow, and develop. The theory is called experiential learning to emphasize the central role that experience plays in the learning process, an emphasis that distinguishes ELT from other learning theories. The term experiential is used therefore to differentiate ELT both from cognitive learning theories,

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<sup>11</sup> Liv, "The Parables," 35, accessed February 9, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.



which emphasize cognition over affect, and behavioral learning theories, which deny any role for subjective experience in the learning process.<sup>12</sup>

Jack Mezirow first introduced a theory of adult learning that helped explain how adults changed the way they interpreted their world. This theory of transformative learning is considered uniquely adult that is grounded in human communication where “learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience in order to guide future actions.”<sup>13</sup> It is transformative learning theory that explains the learning process of constructing and appropriating new and revised interpretations of the meaning of an experience in the world. The transformative process is formed and circumscribed by a frame of reference. Frames of reference are meaning structures inclusive of assumptions and expectations that frame an individual’s tacit points of view and influence their thinking, beliefs and actions. It is the revision of a frame of reference in concert with reflection on experience that is addressed by the theory of perspective transformation—a paradigmatic shift. The transformative process explains how adults revise their meaning structures. Meaning structures act as culturally defined frames of reference that are inclusive of meaning schemes and meaning perspectives. Meaning schemes, the smaller components, indicative of specific beliefs, values, and feelings that reflect interpretation of experience.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> David A. Kolb and Richard E. Boyatzis, *Experiential Learning: Experience as a Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984), 277.

<sup>13</sup> Kolb and Boyatzis, *Experiential Learning*, 287.

<sup>14</sup> Edward W. Taylor, “Transformative Learning Theory,” Springer, accessed February 12, 2018, [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-6300-797-9\\_2](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-6300-797-9_2).

Transformation, learning, changing, and doing can be defined in the context of a leadership development model. Transformation means deep enduring change, where new capacity, vision, energy, and potential are created and realized. Organizations are modified continually by the relationships going on as work is done. The purpose of leadership development is not to train a person to perform a specific task in a certain way (competency), but to create the capacity to find meaning within the work itself performed within a relational community. Leadership development must be experienced within the continuing relationships of a relational community engaged in doing common work together.<sup>15</sup> Training is the acquisition of skills to perform a job to agreed standards. It improves human performance. The tools of training are instruction, demonstration, practice, and evaluation. In contrast, development has as its aim to empower people to acquire new viewpoints, horizons, or technologies. It provides different ways of looking at the middle layer and opportunities to grow at the earthquake layer. It enables leaders to proactively move an organization to new expectations while building motivation to excel in present expectations; even as leaders themselves grow. The tools of development are defined in the language of process: true learning, reflection, relationship, and feedback. The distinction between skill training and development is not meant to depreciate skill training. An effective leadership development system in any organization will incorporate skill training. In the development context, training provides not only a means to perform to expectation, but to free a person for creative expansion.<sup>16</sup> Internal

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<sup>15</sup> Bell Skip, "Learning, Changing, and Doing: A Model for Transformational Leadership Development in Religious and Non-Profit Organizations," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 9, no. 1 (2010): 19-21, accessed February 9, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>16</sup> Skip, "Learning, Changing, and Doing," 24-27, accessed February 9, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

development and the external demonstration (skill) support personal growth and an improvement in ministry performance; providing shared experiences and language that support the growth of communities.<sup>17</sup>

Transformational leadership represents a movement away from the previous social-scientific, relational theories of management and emphasizes the systems approach to problem solving. It combines historical, biographical, and behavioral data with a humanistic approach that emphasizes the moral and ethical qualities of leadership.<sup>18</sup> Identifying some of the deepest, “below the surface” thoughts, feelings, assumptions, and beliefs is usually a precondition of behavioral change—one too often shirked in development programs; causing them to fail.<sup>19</sup> We are concerned here to explore the relation of transformation and Christian leadership.

### **A Universal Model of Leadership**

In the field of leadership there exists a random collection of good information; a plethora of models, research studies, theories and bodies of work, each aimed at explaining some aspect of human behavior, capability, or awareness that will provide greater leadership effectiveness. None of the various models, theories and research was integrated or related. The Universal Model of Leadership is an integrated, 360 degree

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<sup>17</sup> William J. Rothwell, Roland Sullivan, and Gary N. McLean, *Practicing Organization Development: A Guide for Consultants* (San Diego, CA: Pfeiffer and Company, 1995), 157.

<sup>18</sup> Deborah A. Carver, “Transformational Leadership: A Bibliographic Essay,” Scholars Bank, accessed February 9, 2018, <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/187/carver8.pdf?sequence=1>.

<sup>19</sup> Pierre Gurdjian, Thomas Halbeisen, and Kevin Lane, “Why Leadership Development Programs Fail,” McKinsey, accessed February 9, 2018, <https://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/leadership/why-leadership-development-programs-fail>.

survey model of leadership, organizational development, psychology, success literature and human potential. Robert Anderson and William Adams, developers and administrators of the model have a combined sixty years' of working with leaders on their development. The model is based on some of the best research done in psychology, sociology, anthropology and organizational development; incorporated the work of foundational thought leaders Peter Block, David Burns, Robert Fritz, Karen Horney, Peter Senge and Ken Wilber.<sup>20</sup>

Leadership is a conversation. Leaders spend most of their days in conversations—meetings, phone calls and emails. How leaders show up in these conversations determine their level of effectiveness. How leaders show up together in conversations drives their collective intelligence and effectiveness. The level and consistency of collective effectiveness makes the difference between organizations that perform well and those that do not. Individual intelligence and effectiveness is necessary, but insufficient for extraordinary performance.<sup>21</sup> Peter Senge talked of finding leverage points within a system; an action taken, or change made that has a magnified positive and lasting impact on intended results as a way to enact significant change; effective collective intelligence is that leverage in the system.<sup>22</sup>

The Universal Leadership Model is administered to leaders in organizations and to their superiors, colleagues and subordinates with the purpose of gaining insight from the leader's sphere of influence about the leader's effectiveness. The backbone of the

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<sup>20</sup> Robert J. Anderson and William A. Adams, *Mastering Leadership: An Integrated Framework for Breakthrough Performance and Extraordinary Business Results* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2016), xxviii.

<sup>21</sup> Anderson and Adams, *Mastering Leadership*, 23.

<sup>22</sup> Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 138.

model is the five stages of adult development framework pioneered by Robert Kegan.<sup>23</sup>

The first two stages of adult development represent the child and adolescent levels of development. The other three stages, the Reactive Mind, Creative Mind, and Integral Mind are progressive stages of development that determine leadership effectiveness. The Reactive Mind has developed to grow us into adult life and is structured for compliance within the adult world; it is not structured for the complexity required in leading transformative change. At this level of identity, we merge into the prevailing culture because we understand ourselves as fitting into the world, not engaging it in creative and innovative ways. Research has shown that the creative characteristics of the model strongly correlate to leadership effectiveness and that the reactive leadership styles are strongly inverse to leadership effectiveness.<sup>24</sup>

To see how the stages of development related to leadership effectiveness, Anderson and Adams collaborated with the University of Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business Stayer Center for Executive Education who are at the forefront of the leadership development field. Notre Dame's program is based on the Executive Integral Leadership Model (EIL) that incorporates stages of development. A study was constructed using the Universal Leadership Model and the Maturity Assessment Profile (MAP) which was the most psychometrically sound measure of stage development available in a paper and pencil assessment. Both surveys were administered to ninety leaders and the correlation between the two showed a strong .65.<sup>25</sup> The study strongly

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Keagan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 268.

<sup>24</sup> Anderson and Adams, *Mastering Leadership*, 205.

<sup>25</sup> Anderson and Adams, *Mastering Leadership*, 53.

suggests that a very large component of a leader's effectiveness is the structure of the mind out of which the leader is operating: consciousness and competence rise together. The premise at the heart of the Universal model of Leadership is that consciousness can evolve into higher-order capacity to meet complexity. Many psychological researchers have described a series of progressive stages as leaders move from infancy to mature stages of moral, ego and spiritual consciousness at similar stage descriptions.

Leaders develop through a series of sequential stages, and these same stages exist in all cultures. Transformative change requires all stakeholders to shift to a higher stage of development. Without this personal transformation this improvement will be temporary, and the organization will likely revert back to its prior equilibrium since the inner consciousness has not changed. At each progressive developmental stage, a new, higher-order structural design principle is established to relate the self to the world; reality does change. There is no organizational transformation without first transforming the consciousness of the leadership.<sup>26</sup>

“Leadership is the capacity to influence others through inspiration motivated by a passion, generated by a vision, produced by a conviction, ignited by a purpose.”<sup>27</sup> The Creative Mind orients on purpose and expresses an overarching passion for the people and the work. Leaders operating from the creative mind have a constant focus on a desired future vision; brought through authentic, collaborative action. Creative Leaders individually and collectively create organizations they believe in, creating outcomes that matter most and enhance the collective capacity to create a desired future. The Creative

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<sup>26</sup> Anderson and Adams, *Mastering Leadership*, 61-65.

<sup>27</sup> Miles Munroe, *The Spirit of Leadership: Cultivating the Attitudes that Influence Human Action* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2005), 59.

Mind starts from purpose and vision; it does not start with the problem. The focus on vision, fueled by passion, results in action, not reaction. Competency alone does not make for effective leadership. Great leadership is connected to the deepest parts of ourselves and has more to do with courage, character and conviction than it does with skills or competencies. When we describe great and effective leadership, we describe something beyond skill, capability and competence. We use words like integrity, honesty, passion, vision, risk-taking, fearlessness, compassion, courage, and authenticity. Anderson and Adams refer to this as the inner game and the outer game. The inner game, our operating system, drives and defines the outer game. We are playing two games at all times; the outer game of leadership which is our knowledge and experience, and the inner game or operating system is our inner consciousness. The inner games consist of our meaning-making system, our decision-making system, our values and spiritual beliefs, our level of self-awareness and emotional intelligence, the mental models that we use to understand reality, think, act and create and the inner beliefs and assumptions making up our personal identity. These make up the complex internal system we use to relate to the world. As the inner games evolves and matures, the more effective leaders become as they evolve towards the creative mind.<sup>28</sup>

### *The Whole Systems Approach*

The Whole Systems approach balances the development of competence and capability with the evolution of consciousness and character. The Universal Leadership Model looks at those competencies that are labeled creative, that support effective

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<sup>28</sup> Anderson and Adams, *Mastering Leadership*, 31-42.

leadership and those characteristics that are labeled reactive, that negatively impact effective leadership.<sup>29</sup> The model breaks these competencies into those that support effective relationships and those that support effective task completion. In the middle of the top half of a full circle is the summary characteristic labeled authenticity.

Authenticity is critical to overall effectiveness of leaders, and thereby leadership development and impacts relationships and the ability to provide ministry services or commercial products. In the model, the summary dimension of authenticity is measured through two characteristics, integrity and courageous authenticity. Courageous authenticity measures the leader's willingness to take tough stands, bring up risky issues that the group avoids and the willingness to openly deal with difficult relationship problems. Relating, one of the relational dimensions, measure the leader's capability to relate to others through caring relationship, collaboration and mentoring. Self-Awareness, the other relational dimension measures personal learning and life balance.<sup>30</sup>

System-awareness and achieving are the two-task achievement dimensions and measures the leader's ability to think systematically and plan strategically; ability to achieve and sustain results through decisive decision making and execution. Increasing the effectiveness of leaders in the creative dimensions reduces their reliance on reactive tendencies that are represented on the bottom of the leadership model.

There are multiple measures of reactive behaviors that are run from well-researched self-limiting beliefs that fit neatly into one of three types and form the core organizing beliefs and behaviors of each type. The reactive tendencies and leadership

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<sup>29</sup> Anderson and Adams, *Mastering Leadership*, 51.

<sup>30</sup> Anderson and Adams, *Mastering Leadership*, 154.



behaviors reflect inner beliefs and assumptions that limit effectiveness, authentic expression, and empowering leadership. Complying, one of the summary dimensions, measures the extent to which the leader ties their self-worth and security to complying with the expectations of others rather than acting on what the individual intends and wants. Protecting, a second summary dimension measures the extent to which the leader believes that they can protect themselves and establish worth through withdrawal, remaining distant, hidden, aloof or cynical. It is the leader's way of protecting their ego; behaviors that are experienced as superior, egotistical and self-centered. The third summary dimension, controlling, measures the extent to which the leader establishes personal worth through task accomplishment. It does not mean that task accomplishment is not a desirable outcome, but when it is closely tied to the leader's identity it needs protecting and creates behaviors that are expressed through autocratic leadership or excessive ambition.<sup>31</sup> The leader is given feedback in both the creative and reactive dimensions.

The Universal Model of Leadership provides a leader with results that compare the leader's effectiveness with the overall effectiveness ratings of the more than 500,000 leaders who have taken the survey.<sup>32</sup> It also provides raw scores and percentage scores from superiors, colleagues and subordinates; along with a comparison to how others rate the leader and how the leader rates themselves. The outcome is to explore, through conversation, the gaps between how the leader rates their leadership effectiveness and how others perceive their leadership effectiveness. The desire of the collective

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<sup>31</sup> Anderson and Adams, *Mastering Leadership*, 123.

<sup>32</sup> The Leadership Circle, conversation with author, September 12, 2017.

organization is to get their leadership team up in the overall effectiveness ratings compared to the highest performing organizations. This information is valuable, but the model alone can also be used for development.

The underlining research to the model validates that the creative characteristics improve leadership effectiveness, while the 360-degree feedback information provides targeted areas for individual and team leadership development. Without the targeted areas, an organization is able to build a leadership development curriculum that focuses on the engagement and development of the creative dimensions while raising awareness on the reactive dimensions and their impact on leadership effectiveness.

### **Conclusion**

Jesus used stories to teach because they provided multi-layer communication that adults could learn from over long periods of time. The stories captured their attention, engaged the mental and emotional condition of the listener and provided an opportunity for earthquake changes to occur. Today, this development is called experiential learning theory because it used a holistic model of learning and is transformative learning because it supported learning that could provide a new or revised interpretation of meaning to an individual's prior experience. It did not improve a skill, but worked on the "inner game," the core values and beliefs that determined the outward behaviors. This, done with individuals and within communities is the core of leadership development.

The Universal Leadership Model is designed has a 360-degree survey tool and it can provide valuable input when administered to the leader only. The leader is able to see where they fall on each of the characteristics of the model and provides a point of

inquiry. Not having the input from their sphere of influence the leader is not aware of how they see themselves compared to how others see themselves. Without using the survey at all, the components of the model work well for defining the internal characteristics and the external skills to grow effective leaders. Using this model for development in an experiential way will provide leaders and the communities where they serve to grow individually and collectively. The model does not merely affirm Christian values but focuses on core creative competencies that are foundational to our journey like honesty, integrity, passion and purpose. It provides task-based characteristics that support effective work completion; sustainable productivity, systems thinking, strategic focus and decisiveness. It gives voice and understanding to the destructive reactive thinking and behaviors that are counter to effective leadership like controlling, complying and protective beliefs and behaviors.

Using the model in this way also provides the opportunity to build covenant relationships within the community. When leaders come together to explore their meaning-making process, they do so through their own experiences; experiences that they retell out loud and share with others. Sharing and learning together opens up opportunities for genuine, authentic relationships to begin and grow.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **PROJECT ANALYSIS**

Embassy Covenant Church International is a relatively young church having been in existence for about thirteen years. Embassy suffers from ineffective ministry execution due to the absence of self-awareness and leadership skills. The church does not have a Christian Education department and does not belong to an organization of churches that provides Christian education or leadership training. This project launched the flagship class in the Embassy Diamond Leadership Academy, Mastering Leadership. This project is the foundation for the leadership development system at Embassy Covenant Church International. The hypothesis of the project was that a covenant leadership model would help leaders understand why covenant relationships are important to effective leadership and to gain self-awareness of what prevented them from being covenant leaders.

The purpose of the project was to provide a comprehensive leadership development model to increase personal awareness and develop a common language for effective ministry leadership. The project captured the participant's initial beliefs about effective leadership at Embassy and explored how self-awareness impacts a leader's ability to build and sustain relationships that support effective ministry leadership.

The project was six two-hour sessions that included the self-administered Universal Leadership Model that explores the inner and outer operating systems as

defined by the authors Robert Anderson and William Adams.<sup>1</sup> Through this exploration, the participants were provided tools of a shared language and skills to help surface their level of self-awareness in the areas of the model's dimensions. The effectiveness of the training was evaluated by collecting and triangulating data from the pre and post surveys, the Universal Model results and observations from a problem story role play and a focus group exercise.

Senior leadership in any organization provides vision, guidance and the moral compass for other leaders and for each employee and volunteer in the organization. Where the moral compass is based on the understanding that true relationships are the foundation of leadership, who the leader is weighs more than what the leader knows. Kingdom leadership is absolutely one of these organizations. Personhood, as Bonhoeffer defines it is community with God and with each other.<sup>2</sup> If personhood is relationship with God and with others then how can leadership be anything less? Taking this as truth, a core component of a leadership development system must include the exploration of how leaders build and support foundational relationships within the local church.

### **Methodology**

The Universal Leadership Model is an integrated, 360-degree survey model of leadership and organizational development. The developers and administrators of the model have a combined sixty years of working with leaders on development. The model

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<sup>1</sup> Robert J. Anderson and William A. Adams, *Mastering Leadership: An Integrated Framework for Breakthrough Performance and Extraordinary Business Results* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2016), 23.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen J. Nichols, *Bonhoeffer on the Christian Life: From the Cross, For the World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 61.

is based on some of the best research in psychology, sociology, anthropology and organizational development. Leadership is a conversation. Leaders spend most of their days in conversations with people or through electronic media. How leaders show up impacts their ability to build trusting relationships. The model is administered to leaders in organizations and to their superiors, colleagues and subordinates with the purpose of gaining insight from the leader's sphere of influence about the leader's effectiveness. The model provides raw individual scores on a five-point scale and percentile scores based on where the leader placed in relationship to the norm base. High scores are beyond the sixty-seventh percentile, medium scores are between the sixty-sixth and the thirty-third percentile and low scores are below the thirty-third percentile. Low and medium scores show areas of opportunity for growth. The instrument did not provide composite scores for the group.

This project did not use the model to collect peer, boss or others' input about the participant as it is most commonly used, but as a comprehensive set of leadership competencies and skills. Using only the self-administered portion of the model, the leaders took an introspective look at themselves through the eighteen creative competencies in five summary dimensions. The creative dimensions are arranged at the top of the model circle along the Relationship-Task axis with relating and self-awareness on the left or relationship side and Achieving and Systems Awareness on the right or task side. Authenticity is in the center as it is central to leadership effectiveness for both task and relationship. The survey also asked questions that rated ineffective leadership traits in three categories that show on the bottom half of the model circle. This project focused on the five creative summary dimensions.

### **Implementation**

The project consisted of six two-hour sessions. The project originally planned for eight sessions but was reduced to six weeks due to various calendar conflicts. There was a total of twenty-one participants. All participants were in formal leadership positions or were considered informal leaders by the senior leadership of the church. The average overall participation was about eighty-six percent. Thirteen were female and eight were male. Participants were divided into two other categories, millennial and mature leaders. Fourteen (67%) were millennial leaders, thirty-seven years old or below and seven (33%) were mature leaders over thirty-seven years old. This was an important category for Bishop Smith because of concerns he had about the millennial leaders at Embassy.

After those invited accepted their invitation to participate and all the required paperwork was received, they were emailed a pre-session survey of twelve questions. Twelve participants responded to the pre-session survey where all seven of the mature leaders responded and five (36%) of the millennial leaders responded to the survey.

#### *Session One: Project Orientation*

The first session opened with prayer and a welcome from Bishop Smith and the ground rules were set that would govern their interactions over the next six weeks. Course materials were handed out, which included a copy of the book *Mastering Leadership: An Integrated Framework for Breakthrough Performance and Extraordinary Business Results* and a power point presentation (See Appendix A). The group established their ground rules for the balance of their time together. The researcher

reviewed the power point and the corresponding pages of the book with the participants. Included with the purchase, a book was an online self-assessment using the Universal Leadership Model. Participants were instructed to complete the survey online and bring their results to the next session. The results were an integrated part of the conversation for the next five weeks. The remaining sessions were outlined as follows.

*Session Two: Mental Models and the Ladder of Inference*

Session two started with opening prayer and a review of the ground rules. Fifteen (71%) of the participants took the online survey of which twelve (80%) were millennial leaders. When asked by the researcher if there were any surprises in the results, six of the participants who had taken the survey (40%) found one or more of their results to be a surprise and of the six participants, eighty-five percent were millennial leaders.

The instructional phase of the session started with a review of the power point referencing Luke 6:41 and Matthew 7:3-4 (See Appendix B). The question was addressed: What is the beam that is in my eye and why can't I see it? Our experiences and the stories we make out of them and feelings we attach to them become deeply held beliefs about how the world work. They become our mental models. Mental models impact the creative summary dimensions of relating, self-awareness, authenticity and achieving as they outline and guide our internal operating system of values; or what the authors refer to as the inner game. Undiscovered, they can be the foundation of the reactive dimensions of complying, protecting and controlling in the Universal Leadership Model.



The unconscious mental models automatically provide meaning in the background for current and future experiences and events based on the way we made meaning of past events. This unconscious and automatic application is presented as an absolute truth and not a possible truth that deserves validating. The session then introduced two skills central for exposing and exploring mental models: reflective thinking and high-quality advocacy and inquiry.<sup>3</sup> These skills are used in conjunction with a very powerful and useful tool: The Ladder of Inference.<sup>4</sup>

The Ladder of Inference is a pictorial model to help understand and slow down the thinking process that adds meaning to observed data. Each rung of the ladder is used to show the steps that the brain takes, unconsciously, when moving from the concrete observable data to the lofty move to action. The model visually shows how unstable and unchecked our action can be because it is based on mental models established through other experiences, applied to a new situation. The Ladder of Inference helps surface mental models and how they influence the observable data we select and how we add meaning to the data. The team exercise was used to engage the participants and demonstrate the use of the ladder.

The team exercise used Exodus 1:6-22 to explore the thinking of the new king of Egypt using the Ladder of Inference. The participants were placed into three random teams (count off in threes). Each team was provided a copy of the exercise and given twenty minutes to read the passage and explore with their team the mental models that may help explain the behavior of the new king. They were instructed to select the

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1990), 8-35.

<sup>4</sup> Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 142-154.

observable data and place the added meaning and assumptions to the rungs of the ladder. Each group reported on the results from their group discussion in a round-robin style. Once the exercise was completed, the researcher posed the question, “As leaders, how can our mental models impact the ministry and the faith and lives of those we lead?”

The debrief of the team exercise and the response to the follow-up questions provided the researcher with information from the group on the application and understanding of mental models and exploring them through the tool of the Ladder of Inference. The next week the group explored ways to expose mental models by going up and down the ladder using high quality advocacy and high-quality inquiry. The researcher recorded her observations from the team exercise.

### *Session Three: Defensive Routines and High-Quality Advocacy and Inquiry*

The session opened with prayer, an acknowledgement of the ground rules and the power point presentation was reviewed with the participants (See Appendix C). Defensive routines support the negative reactive dimensions of complying, protecting and controlling. High-quality advocacy and inquiry impact the creative summary dimensions of relating, self-awareness, authenticity and achieving.

Reflective thinking is the process of slowing down thinking, through reflection to determine where meaning may have been added to what data was observed. It is the first step in the process to bring to consciousness the things that are done unconsciously. Once there is an awareness of added meaning, the skill of high quality advocacy is used to share with others what meaning is being added, where and why. Advocacy is stating your position while inquiry is inquiring into another person's position. Conversations are

ineffective when participants have unproductive conversations. The most important guideline for using high quality advocacy and inquiry effectively is the genuine desire to relate to others with dignity and curiosity that flows from the heart.<sup>5</sup> This is not a win and lose or debating conversation, but one intended to build relationship through understanding. Unproductive advocacy and inquiry prevent a deeper understanding of the issues and it hurts people and damages relationship. One underlying reason for unproductive conversations is defensive routines.<sup>6</sup> When an individual believes their mental models are being attacked, defensive routines emerge as a defense against embarrassment.<sup>7</sup> This protective behavior serves as a barrier to true, sincere sharing.

Unproductive advocacy has an underlying model of fierce competition. Participants take every opportunity to dominate a meeting even if their points have already been made. The goal is to damage their opponent's argument and perhaps their opponent, while ignoring data and perspectives and if all else fails, yell. Unproductive inquiry is often another form of unproductive advocacy, cloaked in questions intended to hide the assumptions underneath them. Unproductive inquiry usually has motives that are created in our unconscious, arising from a mental model, that surface as rhetorical questions or questions that interrogate more than interview for understanding and clarity. In these conversations, it is more important to look good than to learn and risk exposing our position or mental model.

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<sup>5</sup> Fred Kofman, *Authentic Communication: Transforming Difficult Conversations in the Workplace* (Louisville, CO: Sounds True, Inc., 2014), 35.

<sup>6</sup> Chris Argyis, *Knowledge for Action: A Guide to Overcoming Barriers to Organizational Change* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1993), 26.

<sup>7</sup> Argyis, *Knowledge for Action*, 18.

High quality advocacy and inquiry promote mutual learning and deeper understanding. It increases commitment and supports the surrender of old habits and old mental models including the possibility that meaning could be added that is not there. High quality inquiry is a sincere and curious use of open ended questions intended to understand the thinking of others. This brings the thinking of the other into the open conversation for understanding, review and correction.<sup>8</sup>

In these conversations, participants commit to learn and to help others learn and grow. Productive conversations move the collective thinking forward and creates a shared understanding and direction. It reveals and resolves potential flaws in reasoning, gaps in information and conflicts in goals. Productive conversations require self-awareness and awareness of others as the foundation to the development and sustaining of trusting covenant relationships; inviting us into meaningful leadership relationships.

Two participants volunteered to demonstrate the use of high quality advocacy and high-quality inquiry in a pre-written role play (See Appendix E). The class was instructed to look for areas of quality advocacy and inquiry and where the leader may have weakened or strengthened the relationship during the difficult conversation. In addition to this information, some of the participants asked questions about their own situations and how those may have been handled differently. One millennial participant shared after the session an epiphany moment that is included in the researcher's observations.

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<sup>8</sup> Argyis, *Knowledge for Action*, 20.

### *Session Four: Johari Window and Emotional Intelligence*

The session opened with prayer, an acknowledgement of the ground rules and the power point presentation was reviewed with the participants (See Appendix D). This session continued to develop an understanding of the inner operating system and expanding areas of disclosure and feedback using the Johari Window and the introduction of Emotional Intelligence. The Johari Window was developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in the 1950's as a window with four panes, each representing an area of information known and unknown by oneself, and known and unknown by someone else.<sup>9</sup> The Johari Window and Emotional Intelligence support the creative dimensions of relating, self-awareness and authenticity. Deficiency in these areas can support the reactive dimensions of complying, protecting and controlling.

The upper left quadrant is the open area where things are known by self and known by others. It can be something as obvious as height or hair color or something more personal that has been shared between the two parties. The upper right quadrant is the area that is known by others but not known by self; the blind spot. This is the area that requires openness and inquiry by self to understand how others receive them. The only way to expand the open area into the blind spot or become more transparent is to engage others with the willingness to explore the mental models supporting the beliefs and behaviors.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Chris Argyris, "Double-Loop Learning, Teaching and Research," *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 1, no. 2 (November 30, 2017), accessed June 3, 2018, <https://journals.aom.org/doi/10.5465/amle.2002.8509400>.

<sup>10</sup> Argyris, "Double-Loop Learning," accessed June 3, 2018, <https://journals.aom.org/doi/abs/10.5465/AMLE.2002.8509400>.

The lower left quadrant of the model represents the area that is known by self and hidden from others, sometimes referred to as the façade. Self does not want to be exposed and will not be exposed in unsafe and untrusting relationships. It is from this quadrant that defensive routines emerge to protect against shame and embarrassment.<sup>11</sup> Functioning from this quadrant can appear deceitful and does not develop the trust required in covenant leadership relationships. High quality advocacy and high-quality inquiry are needed to open this quadrant up to the open area.

The lower right quadrant represents those areas that are unknown to self and others. This area includes mental models that have not been exposed and are running in the background unchecked. Movement from this quadrant can be revolutionary and is done in multiple steps. The first step is that self becomes conscious of the unconscious and begins to make meaning of it through the exploration of mental models. This moves the unknown to the third quadrant of known by self and not known by others.

The second half of the session introduced the concept of Emotional Intelligence. Daniel Goleman argues that Intelligence Quotient is the only way to measure intelligence.<sup>12</sup> Emotional Intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand and manage emotions in oneself and others. It affects how we manage our behavior, navigate social complexities and make personal decisions. Emotional Intelligence can be divided into self-awareness, social awareness, self-management and relationship management. The class discussion centered around the questions “How do the results of your Universal Leadership Survey inform how you see yourself in relation to the Johari Window and

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<sup>11</sup> Argyris, *Knowledge for Action*, 125.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1995), 8.

Emotional Intelligence?” The researcher’s observations are reflected in the research findings.

*Session Five, Active Listening and Feedback*

The session opened with prayer, an acknowledgement of the ground rules and the power point presentation was reviewed with the participants (See Appendix E). Week five provided skill building training that supported the creative competencies of caring connections, fostering team play and collaborator. Active listening is listening attentively to fully understand the other person and involves giving the other person feedback that you are listening and valuing what they say. Understanding and valuing does not always mean agree, it confirms hearing and understanding; it is not just waiting to speak. Active listening engages high quality advocacy and inquiry and opens the possibility of deep covenant relationships. Active listening supports the summary characteristic of relating, authenticity and achieving.

Feedback is the receiver’s response to the interpreted message and can say as much about the receiver of the message as it does about sender. The message is processed through the mental models of the receiver and the feedback may reflect an application of meaning not intended by the sender. The more aware the receiver is of their mental models and level of emotional intelligence, the more they have the ability to ask open ended questions that provide information and advocate in a high-quality way to provide the sender with information about how the message was interpreted and what meaning was added through the processing of the message. This connects the transmission phase with the feedback phase to build quality, productive conversations.

Feedback supports the summary creative dimensions of relating, self-awareness, authenticity and achieving. Lack of feedback can support the protecting and controlling negative reactive dimensions.

### *Session Six, Commitment and Recommitment Conversations*

The session opened with prayer, an acknowledgement of the ground rules and the power point presentation was reviewed with the participants (See Appendix F). Week six provided skill building that supports all the summary dimensions of relating, self-awareness, authenticity and system awareness. A commitment conversation must include either a promise and acceptance, an offer and acceptance or a request and acceptance. If the request is not clear or the acceptance is not confirmed the breakdown happens in the commitment conversation. When the commitment is perceived to be broken by the leader, it can trigger defensive routines, which lead to unproductive, destructive conversations. In any case, when the commitment is broken or perceived to be broken, a recommitment conversation is required. Commitment and recommitment conversations support the creative dimensions of relating, self-awareness, authenticity and achieving.

A recommitment conversation is an actionable complaint aimed at reestablishing the relationship and getting the commitment back on track. The complaint is made to the person who made the commitment and not to a third party and the complaint is made right away. Both parties use high quality inquiry and high-quality advocacy to genuinely engage in conversations, first intended to mend the relationship and second intended to get the commitment back on track.



### Summary of Learning

A qualitative model was used to collect the data. A narrative research study comprised of church leaders and members was used to implement the leadership development program in six sessions. The purpose of the narrative research study was to provide a comprehensive leadership development model to increase personal awareness and develop a common language for effective ministry leadership. For this research effective leadership is defined as leadership whose foundation is based on trusting and sincere relationships with team members that produce ministry goals and continued relationship development.

A mixed methods approach was used to collect the data for evaluation: (1) “What is effective leadership?”- Pre and Post Survey qualitative data collection method; (2) Self-Assessment using the Universal Leadership Model; (3) Observation: Role Play- “High-quality advocacy and high-quality inquiry.” (4) Focus Group: Team Exercise “Uncovering Mental Models using the Ladder of Inference.” The triangulation uses all four data collection methods.

#### *Pre- and Post-Survey Self-Assessment What is Effective Leadership?*

The pre-survey data represent twelve participants (57%) of the twenty-one participants invited to the training. The pre-survey had twelve questions. The post survey data represented twenty-one participants that completed the survey upon completion of the training. The project used preset categories for the answers to the narrative data and descriptive statistics to interpret dichotomous questions. Three of the pre-survey narrative answers were placed into preset categories of task focus (TF),

relationship focus (RF) or a balanced response that included acknowledgment of the task and on the relationship (Bal). Task focus responses included statement “achieving the goal,” “getting the work done,” and “meeting the objective.” Relationship focused responses included statement “working well with people,” “building relationships,” and “caring about people.” There was one filter question included in the survey; if the participant answered yes to question nine, they were requested to answer question ten. If the response to the question nine was no, the participant would not answer question ten. The narrative answers to question ten did not fit into the preset categories as other emergent categories became apparent through the analysis of the data. The mnemonic for the tables is Q# One is Question #One, and Par# One is Participant #One. Participant numbers with letters associated denote millennial is mil and mature participant is mat.

Table 1. Pre-survey: Questions categories

Question Category	Total #	Question #
Narrative questions	4 questions	1,2,3,10
Dichotomous questions	8 questions	4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12

Table 2. Preset category results for narrative Q#1  
N=12

Preset Category	Total #	Millennial	Mature
Task Focused (TF)	6	3	3
Relationship Focused (RF)	2	0	2
Balanced (Bal)	4	2	2

Table 3. Preset category results for narrative Q#2  
N=12

Preset Category	Total #	Millennial	Mature

Task Focused (TF)			
Relationship Focused (RF)	9	4	5
Balanced (Bal)	3	1	2

Table 4. Preset category results for narrative Q#3  
N=12

Preset Category	Total #	Millennial	Mature
Task Focused (TF)	3	3	0
Relationship Focused (RF)	5	0	5
Balanced (Bal)	4	2	2

Table 5. Emergent categories: Q#10 (qualified from Q#9)  
N= 7

	Total #	Millennial	Mature
Total Qualifying	7	0	7
Past leadership training and/or experience (LE)	3	0	3
Past personal experiences (PE)	2	0	2
Past leadership experience/training and personal experiences (Bal)	2	0	2

Table 6. Pre-survey dichotomous questions  
N=12

Dichotomous Questions	Total Yes	Total No	Millennial		Mature	
			Yes	No	Yes	No
Q# 4- Covenant Relationships within your family?	12	0	5	0	7	0

Q# 5- Covenant relationships within Embassy outside of your family	9	3	2	3	7	0
Q#6-Years of Leadership at Embassy						
Less than five	9	3	5	0	4	3
More than five	3	9	0	5	3	4
Q# 7- Covenant relationships with other Embassy leaders?	10	2	5	0	5	2
Q# 8- Covenant relationships with members of the ministry teams you lead?	5	7	2	3	3	4
Q# 9- Do your past experiences effect your leadership effectiveness?	7	5	0	5	7	0
Q# 11-Have you had leadership development training at Embassy?	2	10	0	5	2	5
Q# 12- Have you had leadership development training outside of Embassy?	8	4	1	4	7	0

Table 7. Pre-survey individual results  
N=12

	Q# 1	Q# 2	Q# 3	Q# 4	Q# 5	Q# 6	Q# 7	Q# 8	Q# 9	Q# 10	Q# 11	Q# 12
Par #1 Mil	TF	RF	TF	Yes	Yes	>5	Yes	No	No		No	Yes
Par #2 Mil	TF	RF	TF	Yes	Yes	>5	Yes	No	No		No	No
Par #3 Mat	Bal	RF	Bal	Yes	Yes	>5	No	No	Yes	PE	Yes	Yes
Par #4 Mil	TF	Bal	Bal	Yes	No	>5	Yes	No	No		No	No
Par #5 Mat	RF	RF	RF	Yes	Yes	5+	No	Yes	Yes	LE	No	Yes
Par #6 Mat	RF	RF	RF	Yes	Yes	5+	Yes	Yes	Yes	Bal	Yes	Yes
Par #10 Mat	Bal	RF	Bal	Yes	Yes	5+	Yes	No	Yes	LE	No	Yes

Par #14 Mat	TF	RF	RF	Yes	Yes	>5	Yes	Yes	Yes	LE	No	Yes
Par #17 Mil	Bal	RF	TF	Yes	No	>5	Yes	Yes	No		No	No
Par #18 Mil	Bal	Bal	Bal	Yes	No	>5	Yes	Yes	No		No	No
Par #20 Mat	TF	RF	RF	Yes	Yes	>5	Yes	No	Yes	Bal	No	Yes
Par #21 Mat	TF	RF	RF	Yes	Yes	>5	Yes	No	Yes	PE	No	Yes

Fifty percent defined effective leadership with a task focus, sixteen percent with a relationship focus and thirty-three percent had a balanced definition. Seventy-five percent defined covenant relationship with a relationship focus only and twenty-five percent provided a balanced definition. Twenty-five percent defined covenant leadership with a task focus while forty-two percent defined it with a relationship focus and thirty-three defined it with a balanced focus. All participants had covenant relationships within their family while seventy-five percent had covenant relationships with Embassy members outside of their family.

Eighty three percent of the pre-survey group had covenant relationships with other Embassy leaders where all five of the millennial group had covenant relationships with other Embassy leaders while seventy-one percent of the mature group did. Five (42%) of the pre-survey group had a covenant relationship with at least one member of the team they lead, two in the millennial group and three in the mature group.

Seventy-five percent had less than five years leadership experience, ten of the twelve had no leadership development training at Embassy and four had no leadership training at all.

Table 8. Post-survey questions categories

Question Category	Total #	Question #
Narrative questions	4 questions	1,2,6,7
Dichotomous questions	3 questions	3,4,5

Table 9. Post-survey Q#1

N=21

Preset Category-	Total #	Millennial	Mature
Task Focused (TF)	0		
Relationship Focused (RF)	8	4	4
Balanced (Bal)	13	10	3

Table 10. Post-survey Q#2

N=21

Preset Category	Total #	Millennial	Mature
Task Focused (TF)			
Relationship Focused (RF)	7	3	4
Balanced (Bal)	14	11	3

Table 11. Post-survey Q#6

N= 21

Emergent Category	Total #	Millennial	Mature
Total Qualifying	21	14	7
Past leadership training and/or experience (LE)	4	3	1
Past personal experiences (PE)	4	2	2

Past leadership experience/training and personal experiences (Bal)	13	10	3
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Table 12. Post-survey dichotomous questions

N=21

Dichotomous Questions	Total Yes	Total No	Millennial		Mature	
			Yes	No	Yes	No
Q# 3- Covenant relationships with other Embassy leaders? (Pre-survey Q# 7)	10	11	3	9	7	2
Q# 4- Covenant relationships with members of the ministry teams you lead? (Pre-survey Q# 8)	10	11	6	8	4	3
Q# 5- Do your past experiences effect your leadership effectiveness? (Pre-survey Q#9)	21	0	14	0	7	0

Table 13. Post-survey individual results

Par#	Q# 1	Q# 2	Q# 3	Q# 4	Q# 5	Q# 6
#1 Mil	Bal	RF	Yes	No	Yes	PE
# 2 Mil	Bal	RF	Yes	No	Yes	LE
# 3 Mat	Bal	Bal	No	Yes	Yes	PE
# 4 Mil	Bal	Bal	No	No	Yes	LE
# 5 Mat	RF	Bal	No	Yes	Yes	LE
# 6 Mat	RF	RF	Yes	No	Yes	Bal
# 7 Mil	Bal	Bal	No	No	Yes	Bal
# 8 Mil	Bal	Bal	No	No	Yes	Bal
# 9 Mil	RF	Bal	No	No	Yes	Bal

# 10 Mat	Bal	RF	Yes	No	Yes	Bal
#11 Mil	RF	Bal	Yes	No	Yes	Bal
# 12 Mil	Bal	Bal	No	No	Yes	Bal
# 13 Mil	RF	Bal	No	No	Yes	Bal
# 14 Mat	RF	Bal	Yes	Yes	Yes	LE
# 15 Mil	RF	RF	No	No	Yes	Bal
# 16 Mil	Bal	Bal	No	No	Yes	Bal
# 17 Mil	Bal	Bal	No	Yes	Yes	Bal
# 18 Mil	Bal	Bal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Bal
# 19 Mil	Bal	Bal	No	Yes	Yes	PE
# 20 Mat	Bal	Bal	No	Yes	Yes	Bal
#21 Mat	RF	Bal	Yes	Yes	Yes	PE

The six-week session had a total of twenty-one participants with fourteen (67%) in the millennial group and seven (33%) in the mature group. All the mature group participated in the pre-survey while only five (36%) of the millennial group participated in the pre-survey.

The post survey had seven questions, three narrative and three dichotomous questions from the pre-survey were repeated in the post survey. One additional narrative question was asked in the post-survey.

Table 14. Q#7 – Name one tool or skill and how you will use it to improve your leadership effectiveness.

Improve Leadership Effectiveness
----------------------------------



Par# 1 - I will be more aware of my mental models and how they affect how I work with others. This will help build relationships that are more honest and more fun as we work together.
Par# 2 - Ask better open-ended questions so others can explain how they are thinking and maybe why they don't agree with what I asked them to do.
Par# 3 - Listen better so others know I am listening and that I care about what they say.
Par# 4 - Share the ladder with my team so we can all use it to help see where we might have added the wrong meaning.
Par# 5 - Be more emotionally smart. Help other people control their emotions and understand how that can keep them from doing their ministry work.
Par# 6 - Pray that the Holy Spirit shows me what I don't know, like in the Johari window so I can know myself better and become a better leader, which will help my ministry and me as a leader in the ministry.
Par# 7 - Use the ladder and ask questions so I understand others because they don't know the tool.
Par# 8 - I want to use the ladder more because I think it will help me with my team. I sometimes say something to them and they think I mean something different than what I'm trying to explain. I then try to go back over what I said and show them that I didn't mean what they thought, and it usually ends with somebody not feeling good about the conversation. I think walking up the ladder by telling them what I think and then using the ladder to walk them down, so they can see where they something I didn't mean.
Par# 9 - As I continue to grow and understand myself and how I think (by understanding my mental models) I will more effective as a leader because I will be more honest and build trusting relationships with my team. We all want to do the ministry God gave us and the relationship is important.
Par# 10 - I will use high quality advocacy and high-quality inquiry more often. I sometimes make a statement like a question and that does not help build relationships.
Par#11 - I still think there are people who are not going to be honest with you even if you ask them a sincere question, but some other people will. I can build relationships with those that will be honest if they are looking for me to be more open with them.
Par# 12 - I will be more aware of when I am up the ladder and when other people are up the ladder and try to help us get to a place where we agree to something (the data) and then have a better conversation. I think this will help us get more ministry work done and have more fun too.
Par# 13 - I think the work is still important, but I do understand why a covenant relationship makes it easier to work together especially when we might not agree on something. We say we are a church family, but we don't have family kind of relationships.
Par# 14 - I don't think I do the commitment conversations well. I will ask open ended questions to make sure my team understands what I am asking them to do. God deserves our best and I think people want to do their best. I hope having a better relationship with them also helps when we have to have a recommitment conversation. I will do those when I didn't do them in the past the way it was explained.
Par# 15 - The ladder

Par# 16 - Ask better question and practice active listening skills, which will help me understand my team better and them to understand me better, so we can work together and serve the church better.
Par# 17 - The ladder
Par# 18 - I scored low on integrity and that surprised me. In the class I found out I think it's because I don't share with people the way I think about stuff and that may not look like I'm open to them. I had an experience in my work where I did that, and it didn't go well so I don't do it anymore. This might not work for me.
Par# 19 - See my mental models and figure out where they came from because they might not be working, and I don't know what they are doing.
Par# 20 - The ladder
Par# 21 - Mental models and the ladder and asking better questions will help my team have more honest conversations and work together better.

### *Universal Leadership Model*

The chart below displays the ranking of high, medium and low based on the percentile ratings by participants.

Table 15. Participant rankings by percentile rating

Par #	Relating	Self-Awareness	Authenticity	System Awareness	Achieving
#1 Mil	Med	Low	Med	High	Low
#2 Mil	Med	Med	Low	Med	Med
#3 Mat	High	Med	Med	Med	Low
#4 Mil	High	Low	Low	Med	Low
#5 Mat	High	High	Med	Med	Low
#6 Mat	Med	Med	Low	Med	Med
#7 Mil	Med	Med	Med	Med	Low
#8 Mil	Low	Low	Med	Med	Med
#9 Mil	Med	Low	Low	Med	Med
#10 Mat	Med	Med	Med	Low	Med
#11	Med	Med	High	Med	Low

12	Med	Low	Med	Med	Low
13	High	Med	Low	Med	Med
14	Med	High	Med	Low	Med
15	Med	Med	Low	Low	Low
16	Med	Med	Med	Med	Med
17	Low	Med	Med	Low	Low
18	Med	Low	Med	High	Med
19	Low	Med	Med	Med	Low
20	Med	Low	High	Med	Med
21	Med	Low	Med	Med	High

### *Team Exercise- Focus Group*

The passage used for this exercise is Exodus 1:6-22:

Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them. Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country." So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites and worked them ruthlessly. They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly. The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, "When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys

live. Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?” The midwives answered Pharaoh, “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.” So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own. Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.”

The participants separated into three groups and used the Ladder of Inference to determine the observable data and the additional meaning, assumptions, conclusions, beliefs and actions taken by the new Pharaoh. The groups were given twenty minutes to meet and the researcher conducted a big group debrief of the exercise. Each group was able to determine the observable data but varied between what meaning and assumptions were made but all groups clearly identified the “leap” between the observable data and the actions taken by the Pharaoh. The three teams agreed that the only observable data in the passage was that the Israelites were numerous and filled the land. The teams also agreed that it was important data to understand the mental models of the new Pharaoh, as they were expressed in the passage. These observations included: 1.) Joseph and his brothers and all generations had died; 2.) Joseph and what he had done for Egypt meant nothing to the new king and 3.) The king believed that the numbers of the Israelites were too numerous for them. From these beliefs, the king took actions that were very severe for the Israelites.

The participants then engaged in a twenty-five-minute discussion about what leaders really know, what the observable data is, what mental models they may bring into a situation and what meaning, assumptions and conclusions are added to the data “behind the scenes.” The participants discussed how mental models could impact their ability to be in genuine relationship with the people they lead, with their family and with other

leaders. They discussed their reluctance to share these internal conversations with others, partially because they did not want to be vulnerable and partially because they did not know how to do so without hurting the other person. The researcher guided them in a conversation about how to use the Ladder of Inference to “walk down” their thinking in a way that was open and helped them to explore their own thinking and skill concerning it. The exercise provided the opportunity for an open dialogue and real-time exploration for some of the participants.

After the session, participant number twelve came to the researcher in tears. The participant acknowledged the break in a key work relationship that was being attributed to the lack of understanding about mental models. The researcher spent time to listen and walked through the primary issue to provide some insight about how the participant might begin to engage differently and change the dynamics of the relationship. This exercise confirmed some of the overall lack of awareness that may impart the leader’s Universal Leadership Model rating in relating, self-awareness and authenticity.

### *Role Play*

In week three, the researcher asked for volunteers to do a role play for the group. The details of the role play are included in the Appendix B. Both volunteers were millennials, one male and one female. The purpose of the exercise was to demonstrate using high-quality advocacy and high-quality inquiry in difficult conversations. The scenario was an adaptation of a situation that has occurred at Embassy and undoubtedly at many local churches. The minister of music needed to have a difficult conversation with one of the choir members to address tardiness. The researcher observed both

volunteers struggling to use open ended questions and active listening to engage each other. They demonstrated a need to be heard and not a genuine curiosity to understand the needs or concerns of the other. What the minister of music did not know was that Suzette, the choir member, had been dealing with some life changing situations and was doing all she could to stay engaged with the choir. Further, the minister of music did not ask any questions that would have opened the opportunity to have a genuine conversation about what was going on in her life. Without that genuine concern from the minister of music, Suzette went on the defensive and the conversation did not end well. The researcher then debriefed the exercise.

The researcher guided the debrief as the participants spoke about the lack of open-ended questions from the leader. One comment was that the focus on the tardiness kept the leader from being “curious” about why Suzette was late. Some thought that Suzette should have shared her situation with the leader and then the leader would have understood. The responsibility was on the choir member and not on the leader. The core question posed by one of the participants was “what kind of relationship did they have so that Suzette did not feel comfortable sharing her pain with the leader?” From here the group discussed how genuine relationships enable clear and genuine conversation. The researcher asked them to look at their individual results in the areas of relating, self-awareness and authenticity and then discuss how their strength and weakness in these areas may show up through their relationships. There was about eight-five percent participation in the debrief conversation.

The researcher’s observation is that the group is increasing in their understanding of the inner operating system and how the system impacts their leadership effectiveness.

The art of asking good questions can be developed, but genuine and authentic concern for the other person impacts the way the questions are framed and received. The ability to slow down our own thinking to question the intent of the question changes the framing and the impact of the question on the receiver and on the relationship.

### *Data Triangulation*

The purpose of the project was to provide a comprehensive leadership development model to increase personal awareness and develop a common language for effective ministry leadership. There were four data collection methods: pre and post survey, “What is effective leadership?” Universal Leadership Model survey; team focus groups; and role play observation. The data suggests the following findings.

Finding Number One: Participants awareness of the connection between effective leadership and covenant leadership increased.

- i. 50% of pre-survey participants defined effective leadership with a task focus and 41% defined covenant leadership with a relationship focus, see Tables 2 and 4. This suggests that the majority of the group did not define effective leadership as covenant leadership.
- ii. 62% of the post-survey participants defined effective leadership as balanced, focused on both task and relationship and 38% defined effective leadership as having primarily a relationship focus. (Table 9).
- iii. 67% of the post-survey participants defined covenant leadership as balanced, focused on both task and relationship and 33% defined covenant leadership as primarily relationship focused. (Table 10). This suggests that the group gained

an awareness that covenant leadership is an effective way to lead because of the focus on the relationship and the task.

Finding Number Two: Participants understand that past experiences affect leadership effectiveness.

- i. 42% of pre-survey participants were not aware that past experiences affected their leadership effectiveness. 100% of the millennial leaders were in this group. 58% of the pre-survey participants were aware that past leadership training and personal experiences could affected leadership effectiveness (Table 5).
- ii. 100% of post-survey participants expressed awareness that leadership development and or personal experiences could affect leadership effectiveness (Table 11). 100% of the millennial group that participated in the pre-survey expressed awareness in the post survey that prior experience could affected their leadership effectiveness (Par# 1, 2, 4, 7, and 18).

Finding Number Three: Participants have tools and a common language for covenant ministry leadership.

- i. The participants in the week two group exercise were able to use the Ladder of Inference to explore the Bible passage (Appendix B). During the exercise debrief the team participants appropriately used the language of mental models, high quality advocacy and high-quality inquiry in their exploration of the passage. Some of the members were also able to relate the principles to their own leadership experiences.
- ii. In the post survey 100% of the participants were able to name a tool or skill they will use to improve leadership effectiveness. 38% mentioned the Ladder



of Inference, 19% mentioned mental models and 14% mentioned high-quality advocacy and high-quality inquiry as the tools and skills they would use.

### **Conclusion**

Developing leaders at every level is an important responsibility of the church. Any comprehensive leadership development system for the Kingdom must have at its core God's heart and the sincere love for his people. Developing teams of leaders that share experiences in learning together and the development of a common language for discussion, is foundational to a healthy church culture. This project provided a foundation for Embassy Covenant Church International.

Participant leaders entered the six weeks training from different positions. Some had previous leadership training at Embassy and in their workplaces while others had none at all. It was apparent to the researcher that some questioned what they would gain from the six-week training. Even with this apprehension, attendance was good, and the participants maintained their engagement throughout the six weeks. It is postulated this is due, in part, to the strong support the program was given from Bishop Smith and to the experiential design of the sessions.

What proved successful in the seminar was using the session design, biblical text, role play and the group exercise. The qualitative data collection method using open-ended questions during the role play and the group exercise debriefs allowed the participants to be more reflective and practice applying the models and principles in real time. What was especially successful was the use of Exodus 1:6-22 to explore how leaders move to beliefs and action by adding meaning and assumptions to observed data.

Leaders were able to see in a very concrete way how the mind works in the background and how mental models affect how they see and interact with the world. the deeply held beliefs about how the world works. Without the awareness of this process and skill to test the assumptions through high quality advocacy and high-quality inquiry, leaders make decisions on untested assumptions.

One limitation to the study was the number of elements introduced in the six weeks. It may have been more effective to spend more time on fewer elements allowing a slower pace for the sessions. Another option, which would be my suggestion, is to extend the training to a one year program which would meet monthly. During the extended program I would provide more and better integration to Bonhoeffer's theology of community and formation. The experiential learning model emphasizes the central role that experience plays in the learning process and fewer teaching elements would have allowed for more time for reflection and the application of new learning on past experiences. Inline with this limitation was the amount of quantitative data collected through the researcher's observation. The intense focus required to engage, facilitate and debrief the group exercise did not allow the researcher the ability to properly capture specific and individual observations.

Conclusively, I lived much of my early life unaware of my own mental models; trapped and unable to cultivate meaningful relationships. It was through "doing the work" and applying these principals over more than thirty years that I have come to approach myself and others with compassion and curiosity. God is raising up great Kingdom leaders and it is evident from the participation and response of the millennial group that these models and tools have a place in our ministry service. In the future, I

would make this a one-year leadership development curriculum and also conduct train-the-trainer sessions for future facilitators of the curriculum.

**APPENDIX A**  
**WEEK ONE PRESENTATION**

## WEEK ONE PRESENTATION

### The Outer and Inner Game

- Effective leadership is *Conscious Competence*
- The outer game is competence
- The inner game is consciousness
- Competency alone does not make for effective leadership. Leadership goes beyond skill, capacity and competence
- What makes great leaders great?

### The Model- The Inner Game

- Effective Leadership is Consciousness
- What you hold in your (un)consciousness tends to manifest. How mature is your inner game?
- Our meaning-making system
- Our decision-making system
- Our values and spiritual beliefs
- Our level of self-awareness and emotional intelligence
- Our internal beliefs and assumptions making up our authentic self

## The Model- The Outer Game

- Effective leadership is competence
- The inner game runs the outer game
- Behaviors (what is displayed) can change, but alone this is surface level change
- The outer game is important because it is where skill is displayed
- Developing leadership skill (team building, communication, etc.) is necessary but alone is insufficient

## Mastering Leadership- The Model

- The Reactive Mind constructs the self from the outside in
- This construct tends to define ourselves through our relationship, intellectual or results capability
- Reactive Leadership Competencies- Page 68
  - Complying
  - Protecting
  - Controlling
- Diminish effective leadership

## Mastering Leadership- The Model

- Creative Leadership Competencies- Page 75

- Relating
- Self-awareness
- Authenticity
- Systems Awareness
- Achieving

Foundation of effective leadership and fulfilling the leadership promise

## Mastering Leadership- The Model

- We will spend time exploring our consciousness
- We will spend time developing skills
- We will explore the information, application, integration, transformation model
- You will choose "your work"
- You can explore high leverage growth
- You can determine no growth

**APPENDIX B**  
**WEEK TWO PRESENTATION**



## WEEK TWO PRESENTATION

### Mental Models

- These experiences and their images, meanings, stories and feelings become our world view
- Our biblical foundation
  - Proverbs 4:20-23
  - Luke 6:41,42, Matthew 7:3-4
  - The sciences study this from a cognitive mental perspective
  - These become "mental maps" that serve us in a complex environment
- Deeply held beliefs about how the world works
- They serve us in important ways
- They can "distort" the way we process and interpret what we hear and see
- They can "add our meaning" in ways that are not intended by the messenger or the situation.
- They can "extrapolate" meaning and assign it inappropriately

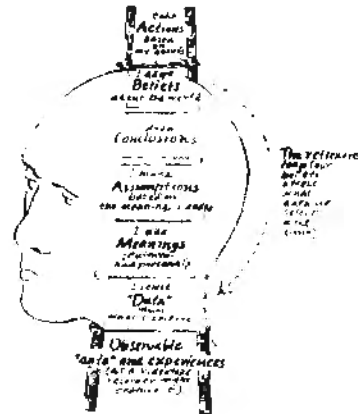
### Mental Models

- IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD, but we believe
- What I see is what is there
- What I say is what you hear
- What I hear is what you said
- How do I know what you see or what you hear if we think we agree?
- When do I know that what we disagree on is not what I hear or what I see?

## Surfacing Our Mental Models

- Reflective Thinking
  - Being open to the possibility
  - Using tools that help bring awareness like The Ladder of Inference
  - Let's look at Exodus 1:6-22 (Handout)
  - We are looking to use this passage of scripture to expose the thinking of "the new king of Egypt"
1. List the observable data. Statements that if we were standing looking through the eyes of the new king we would see.
  2. Then based on the events of the scripture, list the data that the king selected to take in.
  3. What is the meaning the king added to the data that he selected?
  4. What assumptions did he make, based on the meaning he added?

## The Ladder Of Inference



## Mental Models Debrief

- You are leaders in your homes, your offices and here at Embassy
- You may not have jurisdiction of thousands of people but you can do **damage** to one or multiple individuals
- Because of your mental models and allowing them to operate “unchecked”
- Think about a conversation that did not go well. Do you see your unexposed, unchecked mental models playing a role?
- **REMEMBER, THIS ALL GOES ON IN YOUR HEAD**

**APPENDIX C**  
**WEEK THREE PRESENTATION**

## WEEK THREE PRESENTATION

### Advocacy and Inquiry

- Advocacy is stating your position
- Inquiry is inquiring into another person's position
- Conversations are ineffective when participants unproductive conversations
- The most important guideline for using high quality advocacy and inquiry effectively is the genuine desire to relate to others with dignity and curiosity. That flows from the heart.

### Unproductive Advocacy And Inquiry

Prevents a deeper  
understanding of the  
issues or of the  
person's position

Prevents a broader  
understanding of the  
issues or of the other  
person's position

Hurts people and  
damages  
relationships

Perpetuates  
defensive routines

## Strategies for Unproductive Advocacy

- These are usually hidden from our conscious motives, yet our unconscious defensive routines typically create such strategies as:
  - I must not lose— I must win
  - I must save face
  - I must maintain control
  - I must not expose my ignorance
  - I must avoid embarrassment or threat
  - It is more important to speak than to listen
  - It is more important to look good than to learn

## Strategies for Unproductive Inquiry

- These are usually hidden from our conscious motives, yet our unconscious mental models typically create such strategies as:
  - Couch statements as questions
  - Ask only leading or rhetorical questions
  - Don't ask any questions that could expose my position or my mental model
  - Invite others views only if they confirm my own
  - Listen only to what I want to hear
  - Use questions to interrogate more than to interview
  - Use questions to show others' lack of knowledge
  - It is more important to look good than to learn

## High Quality Advocacy and Inquiry

- **High Quality Advocacy and Inquiry:**
  - Promotes mutual learning
  - Promotes deeper understanding
  - Increases commitment
  - Asks participants to surrender old habits and old mental models
  - Acknowledges that I don't have all the answers
  - I may be adding meaning that is not there
  - My job (responsibility, commitment) is to learn and to help others learn and grow

## High Quality (Productive) Advocacy

- Moves the collective thinking of the group forward
- Creates shared understanding and direction
- Reveals and resolves potential flaws in reasoning, gaps in information and conflicts in goals
- Requires self awareness
- Requires you to be aware of others
- Sensitivity, respectfulness and humility
- Skills in asking speaking and listening

## High Quality (Productive) Inquiry

- Productive Inquiry is an essential companion to productive advocacy.
- Is more than knowing what questions to ask and learning how to ask them skillfully
- It is a method of engagement
- Requires attentiveness and genuine curiosity
- The willingness to engage in the wonder of discovering the other person's world

## Balancing High Quality Advocacy and High Quality Inquiry

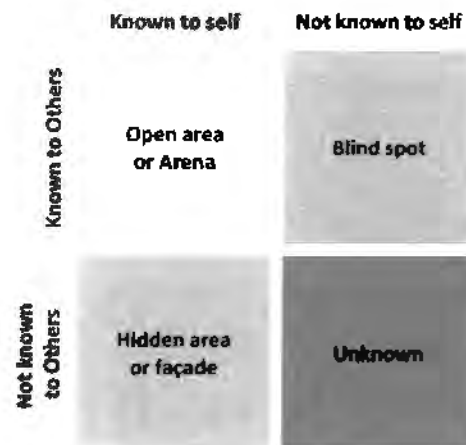
- Quality advocacy and inquiry compounds when you use them together
- If you only advocate you will not learn
- If you only others don't learn
- High quality advocacy and inquiry lead to collaborating and learning
- High quality advocacy and low inquiry lead to forcing and pushing
- Low quality advocacy and high quality inquiry lead to easing and accommodating
- Low quality advocacy and low inquiry lead to withdrawing and withholding



**APPENDIX D**  
**WEEK FOUR PRESENTATION**

## WEEK FOUR PRESENTATION

### The Johari Window



### The Johari Window Model

- Increase the open self area and reduce the blind spot area. This is done by asking for feedback through high quality inquiry.
- Increase the open self area and reduce the hidden self area through high quality advocacy.
- Increase the hidden self and reduce the unknown self through exploration of your mental models
- When and as appropriate, understanding moved from the unknown self can move into the open self

## Emotional Intelligence

**Self-Awareness** is your conscious knowledge of your own character, feelings, motives, and desires. Self-Awareness includes:

- Emotional Self-awareness
- Accurate Self-Assessment
- Self-Confidence

**Social Awareness** is understanding how you react to different social situations and effectively modify your interactions with other people so that you achieve the best results. This is an ongoing development of social skill.

- Social Awareness includes:
- Empathy
- Organizational Awareness
- Service Orientation

## Emotional Intelligence

- Self Management is the management of yourself; the taking responsibility for your own behavior and well being. Self-Management includes:
  - Self-Control
  - Transparency
  - Adaptability
  - Achievement Drive
  - Initiative
- Relationship Management is often referred to as "people skills". Even the most skilled person, because of the normal interactions between people, will have communication breakdowns. Relationship Management includes:
  - Inspirational Leadership
  - Developing Others
  - Influence
  - Change Catalyst
  - Conflict Management
  - Building Bonds

**APPENDIX E**  
**WEEK FIVE PRESENTATION**

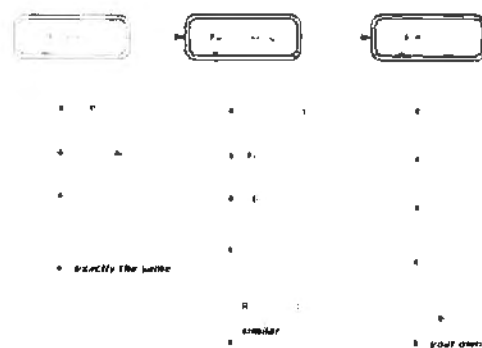
## WEEK FIVE PRESENTATION

## Active Listening

- Active listening is listening attentively to fully understand the other person
- It involves acknowledging the other person and giving them feedback that you are listening and valuing what they say.
- Understanding and valuing does not mean agreeing.
- Active listening is not just waiting to speak

Active  
Listening

## Degrees of Active Listening



## Constructive Feedback

- Constructive feedback is an essential element of leadership and managing people
- Some situations that require giving constructive feedback include:
  - Ongoing performance discussions
  - Providing specific performance pointers
  - Giving corrective guidance
  - Letting someone know the consequences of their behavior
- Part of being an effective leader or manager is knowing what feedback to give
- When to give constructive feedback:
  - Someone asks for it
  - Unresolved problems persist
  - Errors occur again and again
  - An individual's performance doesn't meet expectations
  - The work habits of an individual disturbs you

**APPENDIX F**  
**WEEK SIX PRESENTATION**

## WEEK SIX PRESENTATION

### Commitment Conversations

- What is a commitment conversation?
  - Conversation where we establish an agreement to complete a task
  - We coordinate actions with others to achieve those results
- These conversations are future based
- Commitment conversations are structured around requests, offers and promises
- Promises commit the promisor to accomplish something in the future and constrains other possibilities
- A promise requires the agreement of both parties to make it complete

### Commitment Conversations

- An offer is a conditional promise – I can attend the small group leaders meetings, if I am not required to go out of town on Saturday.
  - If the first is not met then the second is not a promise to deliver
- A request is trying to get a promise from a listener – Can you arrive at church at 9am in order to help with the new offering collection process?
- Commitment conversations must include either a promise (and acceptance), an offer (and acceptance) or a request (and acceptance)



## Recommitment Conversations

- Breakdowns happen in commitment conversations
- We sometimes complain about the breakdown to people who cannot resolve it
- We sometimes complain to the person who can resolve the breakdown, but in an unproductive way
- Unproductive conversations trigger defensive routines
- This does not support covenant relationships

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